

**A Reformed  
Semi-Monthly  
Magazine**

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# THE STANDARD BEARER

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against viewing the Seminary as a  
laboratory for "doing theology," or as  
a think-tank for theological reflection.  
This is a plague in the churches today.*

*See "The Task of the PRC  
with Their Seminary" — page 197*

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February 1, 1990

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## In This Issue . . .

We have in this issue the final installments of two articles which were begun in previous issues. The Editorial, first of all, concludes Prof. Engelsma's address at the seminary convocation last fall. One ought not to deduce, from the quote on the cover, that the professor sees no place for the development of theology in the seminary. For insight into the proper place such development has in a Reformed seminary, read "The Task of the PRC with Their Seminary."

Then there's the continuation of Mr. Joel Sugg's work on suicide. As you've learned from the previous installment, Mr. Sugg's rich style of writing requires that a reader slow down a bit. Personally, I found a second reading to be helpful. Mr. Sugg provides a lot of food for thought, as he demonstrates powerfully how very close the sin of suicide is to all of us.

The Meditation brings to our attention the instruction of the Lord Jesus to His disciples in connection with the rich young ruler's question, What must I do to inherit eternal life? Jesus had, you will remember, put His finger on the idol which was hidden in the man's heart, which kept him from an assurance of God's favor. The man's going away sorrowful provided an occasion for Jesus to instruct His disciples concerning the place of *things, all things*, in the life of the child of God. Through that instruction the disciples saw themselves reflected in the mirror of God's law . . . and they were led to Christ. May our reading of "The Impossibility of a Rich Man Entering the Kingdom" do the same. □

-D.D.

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### EDITORIAL OFFICE

The Standard Bearer  
4949 Ivanrest  
Grandville, MI 49418

### CHURCH NEWS EDITOR

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

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The Standard Bearer  
Don Doezeema  
P.O. Box 6064  
Grand Rapids, MI  
49516

### NEW ZEALAND OFFICE

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

### PH: (616) 243-3712

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# The Impossibility of a Rich Man Entering the Kingdom

## Meditation

Rev. James Slopsema

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*Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.*

*And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom.*

*When his disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved?*

*But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.*

Matthew 19:23-26

Take a sewing needle; take the largest needle you can find. Look at the eye of this needle. Many of us have a rather difficult time passing a strand of thread through that eye.

Now imagine trying to get a camel to pass through the eye of that needle. "Totally impossible," you say? "How absurd even to try such a thing"? Of course. It's impossible for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle.

But impossible as that may be, it is nevertheless easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven.

This can only mean that it is forever impossible for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. This was Jesus' instruction to His disciples.

Just prior to this instruction Jesus had been confronted with the question of the rich young ruler of the synagogue, "Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?"

Jesus' answer to this young man was, "Go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven."

When the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.

In response to this, Jesus turned to His disciples and taught them a very important truth in conjunction with what they had just witnessed.

A rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. In fact, it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

When the disciples heard this, they were exceedingly amazed. Are we perhaps also amazed at this truth?

\* \* \* \* \*

Jesus spoke of the kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven. These are not two different kingdoms, but are one and the same. This kingdom is the glorious kingdom God has established in heaven at the ascension of Jesus.

God promised this kingdom to His people already in the Old Testament. He gave them an earthly picture of this kingdom through the kingdom He established for Israel in the land of Canaan.

Both John the Baptist and Jesus spoke of this kingdom in their ministries, proclaiming it was at hand.

This kingdom has been established on the basis of Jesus' atoning death on the cross. For that reason all the blessings of salvation belong to this kingdom and its citizens.

Although this kingdom was established at Christ's ascension into heaven, it is not yet complete. The kingdom will not be complete until the coming again of Christ from heaven.

Jesus spoke of entering this kingdom.

We enter the kingdom whenever we enjoy the blessings of the kingdom, which are the blessings of salvation. That means that we are able to enter the kingdom already in this life. It is true, of course, that the kingdom is in heaven and we are yet on the

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



earth. Yet, by faith in Jesus Christ we are able to enjoy even now the riches and salvation of the kingdom and in a very real way enter into the kingdom.

We enter into the kingdom more fully at the moment of death. For in death the soul of the child of God is glorified by God in heaven where the child of God enjoys the blessings of the kingdom as he never could during his earthly pilgrimage.

Finally, we enter into the kingdom in the full sense in the day of Christ's return. For then every child of God will be brought body and soul into the kingdom in its completed form to enjoy the salvation of God in all its fullness.

According to Jesus a rich man can not enter into the kingdom. It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom.

Who are the rich of whom Jesus spoke?

The rich are not merely those who possess earthly wealth. Were Jesus speaking here only of those who possess earthly wealth, He would have excluded most of us from the kingdom. Oh, we like to complain about how poor we are. But the fact is that we live in a time of unheard of prosperity. And most of us have a good share of that prosperity. Were the rich of whom Jesus spoke merely those who possess earthly wealth, the only way for us to enter the kingdom would be to sell what we have and give it to the poor.

However, this is not Scripture. Nowhere does Scripture condemn the mere possession of earthly riches. Nor does Scripture elevate poverty as a requirement for entrance into the kingdom.

Fact is, many of the saints who have entered the kingdom of God possessed the wealth of this world in great abundance. Con-

sider, for example, Abraham, Job, David, Solomon . . .

If we will find who the rich are of whom Jesus spoke we must turn to a parallel passage. Mark in his gospel also records this same instruction of Jesus. There Jesus defined the rich as those who put their trust in riches. For, according to Mark, Jesus said, "Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God" (Mark 10:24 & 25).

How often do not men put their trust in riches!

There are essentially two things that everyone seeks in life: security and happiness. In the midst of a life filled with so many uncertainties, everyone is looking for something to provide him with safety and security. And, closely connected to that, everyone is looking for joy and happiness.

Many find this safety and joy in earthly riches. They count on their riches to provide for their needs in the future. Their riches will provide for them when they become sick, when the economy is poor, when they become old and feeble. They feel very secure about the future. And their security is the riches they possess. Besides all this, their riches afford them a life of pleasure and comfort. They are able to afford many luxuries and conveniences in life. Their riches even give them the esteem of men. And this is the joy of their soul. Their trust is in riches!

An example of this is the rich young ruler who came to Jesus to inquire what he must do to possess eternal life. Obviously he had placed his trust in his riches to the point that they were everything to him. Nothing was more important than his riches. His riches were even more im-

portant to him than eternal life.

Such like shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven so long as they continue to put their trust in riches: not in this life, not at the moment of death, not in the day of final judgment.

It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for these to enter the kingdom.

\* \* \* \* \*

In light of this truth, entering the kingdom is totally impossible from the viewpoint of man's ability.

This was the conclusion of the disciples. Upon hearing that it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom, the disciples were exceedingly amazed and said, "Who then can be saved?"

No doubt the disciples' response was prompted by something they saw in themselves. Although none of them possessed any wealth to speak of, they saw their own tendency to put their trust in earthly riches. Hence, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, "Who then can be saved?" In light of what Jesus said, they saw no possibility of entering the kingdom and possessing its salvation.

And Jesus only confirmed their conclusion. With men this (entering the kingdom) is impossible. As far as his own ability is concerned, man is able only to put his trust in riches. Hence, he can not enter the kingdom.

The reason for this is his own depravity. Depraved, fallen man hates God with his whole being. The result of this is that he is not able to find in God the things he needs and desires the most: security and happiness for this life and for eternity. All he has left is earthly riches. For these he works and to these he clings. His trust is in them. He can do none else.



Entering the kingdom is impossible for man.

What is impossible with man, however, is possible with God. It is even possible for God to bring man into His kingdom.

God accomplishes this for all those whom He has ordained to eternal life in Jesus Christ. God brings them into the kingdom by changing them through a new birth. For when we are born again in Jesus Christ we are brought to love the God Whom we by nature hate. And because we now love God there is no

greater joy to us than the joy of God's fellowship in Jesus Christ. Hence, we seek that fellowship in the blood of Jesus. And in that fellowship we place our trust, to provide us with true happiness in this life and for all eternity. Earthly riches have lost the charm and the importance they once had. The joys of God's fellowship in Jesus Christ are our all.

And being born again we come to see that our future is secure only in God's care and provision. Hence, we turn away from the false security of earthly riches to find our safety and

security in God's care of us in Jesus Christ.

Our trust is in Jesus Christ and God's salvation through Him. In this way we also are brought into the kingdom to taste of the great salvation of God and to enjoy the eternal pleasures and securities God has provided for His own.

Let us then turn away from all trusting in the riches of this world. And let us put our trust in God alone and in the provision of His grace in Jesus Christ.

That we may enter into the kingdom of God. □

## Editorial

# The Task of the PRC with Their Seminary (3)

The task of the Protestant Reformed Churches with their Seminary, as argued in two preceding editorials, is training men to be able ministers of the Word of God. This task the Churches have as a mandate from the apostle of Christ: "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" (II Tim. 2:2).

It is not the primary task of the Seminary to develop the science of theology. "Doing theology" is not even a purpose of the Seminary alongside the training of pastors and teachers. I say this even though I love theology, find the study of theology meat and drink, and take huge delight in the fact that the Reformed "Form for the Installation of Professors of Theology" (hereafter, "FIPT")

calls theology, "Queen of Sciences."

Sharp warning must be sounded against viewing the Seminary as a laboratory for "doing theology," or as a think-tank for theological reflection. This is a plague in the churches today. Professors use the classroom for theological speculation that has not the remotest relation to the students' future work as preachers. Seminaries make the students aware of all the competing and conflicting doctrines of our age, without teaching them the sound doctrine of Scripture and the confessions that they must preach to the people. Seminarians are trained to be experts in discovering who the authors of the books of the Bible were, when the books were written, how many parts each book has, and often how human, contradictory, and prone to error the

books of the Bible are; but they are not trained rightly to interpret the content and message of the Bible so that they can carry out the eminently practical task of instructing the congregation in the Word of God.

What is going on in the seminaries today, and has been going on for a long time now, was indicated by the notorious, 19th century higher critic of Scripture, Julius Wellhausen, when he explained why he resigned his position as professor of theology in Greifswald:

*I became a theologian because I was interested in the scientific treatment of the Bible; it has only gradually dawned upon me that a professor of theology likewise has the practical task of preparing students for service in the Evangelical Church, and that I was not fulfilling this practical task, but rather, in spite of all reserve on my part, was incapacitating my hearers*



for their office (quoted in Richard Elliott Friedman, *Who Wrote the Bible?*, New York: Summit Books, 1987, p. 165).

If ever a liberal did the honest thing, Wellhausen did: He resigned his position as professor.

This is not to say that a Reformed seminary has no theological task whatever. It certainly does. A Reformed seminary must study, maintain, and develop theology. Better said, the church herself has a theological task, which she undertakes in part in her seminary. Our Reformed "FIPT" states that the church has a calling to "study theology," which calling she pursues in her "theological school." In his *Reformed Dogmatics*, Herman Hoeksema writes that the church's work in her seminary is "the cultivation of theology, that the truth may be maintained and become ever richer in the consciousness of the church" (p. 630).

The apostle makes the study of theology the church's task in the very passage that mandates the seminary, II Timothy 2:2. For he requires that Timothy teach aspiring pastors by handing over to them a definite body of truth, a body of truth made up of the doctrines which Timothy had heard from Paul. This body of truth ("theology") the seminary intrusts to the students, so that they will teach it to the churches. And the seminary does this — "commits" it to the future pastors, to use the language of the King James Bible — by *teaching* this body of truth to the seminarians. This necessarily involves the study, the maintenance, and the development of the truth, i.e., "doing theology."

But the crucially important truth about this theological task of the church with her seminary is that the study of theology is

not the main task. It is not even a task alongside, and therefore somewhat independent of, the main task of the seminary. Rather, the study of theology is a necessary part of the main task. It stands in the service of that main task. The seminary studies theology *in the activity of handing over the sacred deposit of truth to men who will be pastors and teachers to the people of God*. The seminary's labor in the "Queen of Sciences" is part and parcel of its one, great task: preparing preachers for preaching.

To this theological task of the PRC with their Seminary belong the following. First, there is a body of truth possessed by the Churches which is to be passed on to future ministers by means of the seminary. This body of truth is well-known and well-defined: the things that we have learned from Paul and the other apostles in the inspired Scripture. It is the gospel concerning Jesus Christ, the Son of God, crucified and risen. It is the apostolic doctrine as systematized and authoritatively defined in the ecumenical and Reformed creeds. Even for Timothy, during the lifetime of the apostle, there had to be a standard of the truth that he was to teach: the many witnesses among whom Timothy heard the apostle's doctrine (II Tim. 2:2). These witnesses are now the church's creeds.

We call this body of truth the Reformed faith.

To this, the PR Seminary is committed.

This, the professors have bound themselves with an oath before God to teach the students.

Second, the Seminary defends the Reformed faith against all attacks by the lie; and in the light of the Reformed faith it exposes errors. This too is part of the theological task of the PRC with their Seminary. The Seminary

cautions the would-be pastors with regard to heresies; and it vindicates sound doctrine against the heresies, as both the "FIPT" and Article 18 of the Church Order of Dordt require.

Especially must the Seminary warn the students concerning errors of "the new day" — a happy phrase in the "FIPT."

The Seminary must not live, and wage war, in the past, whether 1953, or 1924, or the 16th century. There are contemporary threats to the faith and to the faithful. There is the attack on Scripture by cunning theories of "hermeneutics" (theories of the interpretation of Scripture), all of which begin with the fatal assumption that the Bible is a human word, at least in part. There is the attack on creation and providence by theistic evolution. There is the attack on redemption by liberation theology and the "gospel" of self-esteem. There is the attack on predestination by universalism. There is the attack on the truth of the Christian life and experience both by the charismatic movement and by the advocacy of sheer lawlessness — revolution; divorce and remarriage; feminism; and homosexuality.

The PR Seminary must, and does, cast down all these high things that exalt themselves against the knowledge of God at the end of the 20th century (II Cor. 10:5).

This does not imply that the past struggles of the PRC are of no interest or value any longer, any more than this is implied about the great Protestant struggle for the faith in the 16th century. Like Protestantism in the 16th century, the PRC have contended for the gospel of the sovereign grace of God in Jesus Christ. This is the struggle of the ages. Besides, our own particular struggles on behalf of particular grace, an unconditional cove-



nant, and the antithesis have put us in a position of strength for fighting the good fight today against modern errors that are destroying Protestant churches on every hand, e.g., universalism as regards salvation and the worldliness of the church in the realm of life and conduct.

Contending for the faith in the course of teaching men to be pastors, the Seminary trains these men to be defenders of the faith in their ministries, for the welfare — the salvation! — of the believers and their children who will be their charge. Although young men may not strive foolishly, to get a name for themselves, strive they must against heresy, as Paul himself does in II Timothy 2 against the denial of the resurrection. This striving is necessary, for the errors eat as does a cancer (II Tim. 2:17).

Third, exactly in this way the Churches maintain the truth in their Seminary. The Seminary is an important factor in the Churches being pillar and ground of the truth (I Tim. 3:15).

The Reformed faith is maintained in the PR Seminary. It is maintained there solely by the grace of God, but it is main-

tained. The Seminary does not spurn the creedal Reformed faith as out-dated scholasticism, but regards the Reformed faith as God's own truth, to be passed on to the children and grandchildren of the present generation, undiminished and uncorrupted.

Because the Seminary studies, maintains, and defends Reformed theology, as it commits this faith to future preachers by teaching, there is also development of theology. Since the development of theology was a main part of my recent speech at the annual meeting of the Reformed Free Publishing Association and since the R.F.P.A. decided that this speech should be published in *The SB*, I can be brief about it here. Suffice it now to say that there has been development of the Reformed faith in the PRC through her theologians and preachers. I need only mention the particularity and sovereignty of grace; the nature of the gracious covenant of friendship; church government; and the antithetical Christian life.

As the Seminary studies the faith, as it explores the faith, as it compares each aspect of the faith with the other aspects, as it

defends the faith against error, and especially as it always goes back to divine Scripture (all in the course of urgent, practical teaching), there will be development of Reformed theology.

This is an important task of the Churches.

For theology is the knowledge of God.

Whether "Queen of Sciences" or not, theology — *Reformed* theology — is essential knowledge, without which all the sciences are monumental ignorance, deceit, and folly. And in theology — *Reformed* theology — is the peace, the power for living, the hope in dying, and the chief end of believers and their children.

For those who teach in the Seminary, a solemn responsibility is implied.

Fulfilling that responsibility "in dependence on the Lord's help and the light of the Holy Spirit," they may expect the cooperation (the working together!) of the people of God, as described by the "FIPT": "that our Seminary may continue to enjoy the respect, the support, the appreciation, the love and the prayer of the Church." □ -DJE

## Letters

### The SB on Cassette

On page 100 under the head "Editorially Speaking . . ." you have an article about the *Standard Bearer* on cassette tape.

The *Christian Observer* is interested in doing an article about that. Would you be kind enough to send it or to ask one of the other editors to do so. We have many readers with vision problems.

Personally, we would like to be on the list of those who receive the tapes; for my husband, Edwin Elliott, Sr. is legally blind. We find it difficult to get material for the blind which is worth very much so we are constantly seeking material which will be of interest and some value to him . . .

Mrs. Edwin P. Elliott, Sr.  
Features Editor, *The Christian Observer*, Manassas, Virginia

### Response

We have asked the Evangelism Society of the Southeast Protestant Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, MI to write the article that you request. They will also be delighted to serve readers of *Christian Observer* who have "vision problems" by sending them *The SB* on cassette tape. The Evangelism Society has added Mr. Elliott's name to the list of



those who regularly receive these tapes.

## On the Special Issue

It was ever a pleasure to be a reader of *The Standard Bearer* for these past sixty years. Recently this joy of receiving our paper has not been dimmed. Fact is, I read the articles with increased joy and profit. I have never sent a letter to the editor before, but the last issue triggered this little note to you and the staff and our readers far and wide.

The exalted theme, the strong and courageous stance that ours is the "Theology of Hope," caused my heart to burn within me!

In my considered judgment the great theme was well subdivided, nicely arranged under suggestive headings, and presented in a very readable and compelling form. Congratulations to all the worthy workmen who participated.

It is my feeling that here we have a good example of what Luke so fondly calls "all with one accord." Brethren, fellow-readers of *The Standard Bearer*, you and I heard a mighty, united testimony from *bearers* of the standard! May none of these witnesses faint in the fray. When filthy errors sweep through the Reformed church world with a horrible unified assault (Acts 7:57), may we stand in one accord for the defense of the truth of the hope

of Israel, the hope of both heaven and earth!

May the Lord continue to strengthen your hands. Readers, pray for these faithful writers, that they may continue to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints. Without such *bearers* of the banner of the truth, who lift aloft the banner of the truth, there shall cease to be a *Standard Bearer* worthy of the name!

Yes, then our readers in all the world must know the truth of the gospel of the cross and resurrection which makes men free to press the footsteps of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to seek the city which has foundation, whose architect and builder is God, who does not fail His own promised glory.

(Rev.) George C. Lubbers  
Grand Rapids, MI

## More on the "Form Of Public Confession"

After rereading the derogatory statements . . . pertaining to our "Form of Public Confession," I still fail to understand all the criticism. Although I would have no difficulty if at some time our churches decided to add to the form the name of Jesus Christ, this should be done in such a way that He could be distinguished from the Jesus that is professed in some of the so-called Protestant denominations of this land.

Although the name of the "Life-Giver" is not mentioned in the form, to "acknowledge the doctrine contained in the Old and New Testaments and in the Articles of the Christian faith" is to profess the name, Jesus, because not only is He central to this doctrine, He is the reason for its existence. This doctrine, "taught here in this Christian Church," has been carefully fought for, over the many centuries since the resurrection of our Lord. Therefore I believe it is very proper that our young people be asked to remain faithful to this "true and complete doctrine of salvation" as it is set forth particularly in the Protestant Reformed Churches.

Although I must agree, "There is no salvation apart from that blessed, essential name," that name needs particular doctrines and creeds to differentiate it from the name of Jesus that is used all about us. This becomes especially apparent at this Christmas season when even the world tries to force its views of humanistic loving and giving upon that name.

In conclusion let me state that, although the "Form" may have its imperfections, it is a very far cry from a "powerless" or "lifeless" form and definitely does not smack of stagnancy. It did not when I made profession and it does not now.

Edward Hoekstra  
Hudsonville, MI □

*The Reader Asks*  
Rev. Cornelius Hanks

## Defense of "Pro-Life"

*Rev. Hanks is a minister emeritus in the Protestant Reformed Churches.*

One of our Bible Study groups asks in connection with I Peter 2:11-17, "When must we obey God rather than man? In which

area of life may this principle be used?"

In the passage of Peter's epistle referred to above, Scripture is



pointing to our calling as Christian pilgrims in regard to the magistrate, emphasizing our duty to "submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake."

The Word of God goes on to say that this includes every form of government and authority placed over us, whether that be a king or a president, whether that be a governor or a mayor, or whether that be a sheriff or a police officer, a stop sign or a speed law, or any other law or ordinance of man.

The basis for this submission lies in the fact that God is a God of law and order, who has "ordained the powers that be" as ministers of God for our good (Romans 13:1-5). When we submit to the higher authority we submit to God, because we love Him and keep His commandments. That is our Christian liberty. God has freed us from the bondage of sin and death. Sin has no more dominion over us. By the grace of God we can, and may, and must keep His commandments. We are His chosen people, His witnesses in the midst of an evil world to let our light shine in obedience and faithfulness to our God. To refuse to submit to those in authority over us would bring dishonor to God's name and cause on the earth.

From this it becomes evident that there is only one occasion in which we refuse to obey the magistrate, and that is when the rulers make laws and ordinances which are contrary to the laws of God. In that case we say, as the apostles declared shortly after Pentecost, "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). When the government requires of us that which is contrary to God's law we may not obey, lest we transgress our God's commandments. We cannot, we may not obey, for conscience sake. We must obey God,

not men. And if we are punished for our submission to the law of God we bear that punishment willingly as persecution for Christ's sake. That also belongs to our Christian liberty. We have the example of our Lord Himself and of the apostle Paul in willing submission to punishment for what is right.

With that the Bible Study Group that sent in these questions have no problem. They are more concerned about the area of life to which these principles apply. And then more specifically they ask: 1. How should we as Christians respond to our government's legalizing of the evil practice of abortion? 2. Is the pro-life practice of carrying signs, handing out literature, etc. at the abortion clinics a proper Christian response?

In regard to the first question, we should not sit idly by while evils are being perpetrated by our government, whether that be local, State, or federal government. We so often take the attitude of "what's the use?" instead of giving expression to our objections and convictions. We should take a firm stand for what is right and make that known. There are proper means whereby we can express ourselves. These means should be used. For example, we can write our representatives in the State capitol and in Washington, or wherever they are located, being ready at all times to give account of the reason for the hope that is within us (I Peter 3:15).

Possibly our strongest witness against the evil of abortion is to impress upon our teenagers the privilege of their Christian liberty. Parents should begin to warn their children, at an early age, of the evils of the world round about them, in which God is no longer recognized, God's commandments are despised, sin is no longer sin, and fornication is

no longer an evil to be condemned. The world round about us is no longer ashamed of immorality or promiscuity. Dating has become in many instances an all night or week-end "experience"; "living in" is no longer frowned upon; sexual relationships outside of marriage are condoned. Young people are only warned to prevent unwanted consequences. In such a world young and old within the church must be reminded of their obligation to love the Lord their God by fleeing from every form of fornication, knowing that their bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, for we are not our own, but we are purchased with the precious blood of Jesus Christ (I Corinthians 6:18, 19).

In the church of Jesus Christ, not only abortions should be foreign among us, but also the sins that bring about the desire for resorting to this evil. We are called to be a shining light in a world that is rapidly becoming ripe for the coming judgment. Our calling is, "Come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (II Corinthians 6:17, 18). □

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## CONSECRATION

Blessed Saviour, may we ever,  
By each act, each word, each  
thought,  
Show to men Thy saving power,  
May they see what God hath  
wrought.  
So our daily joy will be —  
To glorify and honor Thee.

—E.W. Carlisle  
S.B., 1929



## Contribution

Mr. Joel Sugg

# Suicide — Self Murder (2)

Is it possible that even a great multitude of God's people now living are guilty of real and damnable suicide, a suicide within their own hearts? How many of us are guilty, and how often are we guilty of this insidious destruction of our own living persons? Is suicide not only physical destruction, but also an inward resentment against some aspect, or the whole of one's own person, whom God made?

At this point a highly-placed churchman impressively steps forward and, diverting our thoughts for a moment, compliments us for such insight in recognizing what he and others have been preaching for years. We certainly understand — don't we — that this inward suicide has been destroying our "self-esteem" all these years, and that this destruction of "a good self-image" is one of the greatest evils in the church and in the world today, accounting for no end of actual suicide, poverty, crime, school failure, dope addiction, sexual promiscuity, homosexuality, and other such human ruin. He boldly concludes that the church must lead the way to build up those who are poor in "self-esteem" and fight everything that would diminish a "good self-image."

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*Mr. Sugg is a ruling elder in the Protestant Reformed Church of Houston, Texas.*

As the heat of his rhetoric dissipates, the light of God's Word illuminates, and we find that this "self-esteem" is nothing but filthy pride, clothed in appealing psychological garb. This is the same pride which is manifest in everything we do, great and small, that is done without regard for the God of Scripture. In His Word, God has spoken scores of passages about this evil. These passages are summarized simply in part of Proverbs 16:5, "Everyone that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord . . ." and in Jesus' own words in Luke 14:26, "If any man come unto me and hate not his . . . own life also, he cannot be my disciple." This "good self-image" is nothing more than the image of the old man of sin whose very seat within us lies in the self.

Now we see that suicide, in its radical definition, is not destruction *of the self*, but destruction *by the self*, of the very person whom God has created. We realize that in the message of "self-esteem" we have been listening to echoes of the very words of Satan from this "minister of righteousness," and we recognize that we have very nearly fallen victim to what happens to the foolish and the wicked when "pride compasseth them about as a chain" (Psalm 73:6).

In our determination to find the stronghold of the sin of suicide, we have been spared the deadly diversion of the pursuit of

"self-esteem," and with this key guide in our quest, we turn to face the multi-faceted turrets in the fortress of pride, leaning into the Devil's merciless barrage as a wayfaring pilgrim leans into the whipping rain of a thunderstorm. The words of the Accuser are barbed missiles which whirl into the heart of the child of God:

Why did I take the chance?  
How can I bear the shame?  
Why have my friends deserted me?  
Why was I born this way?  
Why did I let this happen?

Why are we so unhappy?  
Why is he so cruel and critical?  
Why won't she stop her incessant complaining?  
Why are my children so buried in vanity?  
Why are my parents so heartlessly strict?

Why can't I be happy, or popular, or rich?  
Why can't I be pretty, or thin, or handsome?  
Why can't I be taller, or smaller, or smarter?  
Why does she hate me?  
Why does he act as though I didn't exist?

Why won't someone help me?  
Why won't they let me help?  
Why do I do these things?  
Why won't anyone listen to me?  
How can I go on?

Why is school so impossible?  
Can't they see they are destroying me?  
Why can't they see my anguish?  
Who cares about me?  
Why do I think of nothing but me?



Why do I have a job that eats me alive?

Why can't I find decent work?

Why can't I have a baby?

These kids are driving me crazy.

Why can't I quit drinking?

Why did I have to say that?

Why didn't I say something?

Why don't they ask me to serve?

Why can't they get somebody else?

Why can't I make enough money?

Why am I so tired?

Why can't I sleep?

Why can't I get up?

Why have I been such a fool?

This pain is driving me out of my mind.

Doesn't anyone understand?

How can I call myself a child of God?

Why am I so weak?

Why am I so alone?

Why has God abandoned me?

I, I, I . . . my, my, my . . . me, me, me!

This torrent of arrows marked *I, me, and mine* pour into my soul, bemoaning the trials and circumstances which beset me; and my self, the old man of sin within me, twists each one in my heart. I am utterly consumed by self; I cannot think beyond that self; I am totally self-intoxicated. I groan in confusion of unbelief, thinking that the shackles which Christ broke at the cross still fetter my body, because the grounds of the Devil's attack seem sound. I roar against the injustice in my life! Anger arises in my heart against all the nagging realities of my life in a hatred of all these things, a hatred of all those whom I think cause them, and, finally, a blasphemous hatred of God Himself.

Here am I, the pot of clay, muttering, ". . . I do well to be angry, even unto death" (Jonah 4:9). I shake my fist in the face of the Potter and wickedly demand, ". . . why hast thou made me thus?" (Romans 9:20). The overbearing, burgeoning cancer of my odious self is crushing the life

of the child of God within. This is the height of self torment, the torment of my godly person by my sinful self. This is the heart of suicide, just as surely as if I had blown that heart in pieces. At last I have reached the inner, most powerful redoubt of the enemy, and I have sinned the great sin of the vicious, violent, vindictive murder of my own person. Exhausted, I collapse in a pitiful heap, woefully blaming all on my own person in the depths of self pity or pridefully seeking the heights of self-justifying martyrdom, both but two sides of the same coin — the central *I, me, and mine* of self-intoxication.

Then the calm, firm voice of Paul comes into my ears, "Nay, but, O man, who are thou that repliest against God?" (Romans 9:20). The still, small voice draws me up, ". . . What doest thou here, Elijah?" (I Kings 19:13). And the sweet psalmist of Israel sings in my heart:

*Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and*

*Why art thou disquieted within me?*

*Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise Him,*

*Who is the health of my countenance and my God*  
(Psalm 42:11).

And finally Jesus says, ". . . If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it" (Matthew 16:24-25).

The incessant demands of my ungodly self are vanquished by the Living Word of God! I am admonished to *speak to that self, but to deny him place and listen not for a moment* to his viperous hisses.

The coursing poisons of self-intoxication are stayed, and I breathe again the breath of Life. At last I am revived in the

warmth of the loving forgiveness of my Father. I am restored to my calling once again to live the thankfulness of loving obedience to the gracious Sovereign God who is Love. The night of living death is dispelled, and in the Son-kissed dawn, the joy of life returns:

*For his anger endureth but a moment;*

*in his favor is life.*

*Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning*  
(Psalm 31:5).

But the war goes on; and there is no discharge in this war, for the Lord in His sovereign counsel has ordained that the old man of sin, even with his dominance broken, will yet remain seated in my own wicked self until I die. I know that there will be times when I may fall under demoralizing assault from outside forces, or that I may experience some peculiar physical illness which uniquely produces tormenting dejection. When these occur, I must acknowledge and deal with them in good judgment, in God's grace taking the skilled and sanctified counsel of other brethren when the measuring rod of my own judgment is only twisted confusion. Yet it remains the case that, if the self is silenced, these other matters can be handled with only a fraction of the trauma caused when that evil-speaking old man within is allowed to amplify upsetting problems to a roaring din. I must shut my ears against the sly and murderous invectives of my vicious self against the new man within me. I must fill my eyes with the Word of God, eyes that are opened by the Holy Spirit. I must seek, with complete dependence on Christ, to obey God's perfect Law, not simply because He has commanded it, but because I love Him and earnestly desire to show my thankfulness to Him by doing that which He has given for my



good as the principal means for my knowing Him.

In the midst of this deep warfare of the spirit, what a joy it is to behold our Most Wise and Powerful Commander, whose victory is already secured, and of whom the whole congregation of all the world's most famous captains make but a shadow. But with that shadow as an example, the soldier of the cross covets and imitates the virtues of the warriors who surrounded David, Alexander, Caesar, Napoleon, Jackson, and Lee in ultimate expression of love for, trust in, and obedience to their beloved generals as they took their battle places.

In the height of such valorous words, we do well to take heed to the cautions of the old soldier who has been much fired-over. He speaks few words, terse and hard-bitten in the main.

He warns that the enemy is so powerful that were it not for our great God of Battles, and Him alone, we would be hopelessly overwhelmed and destroyed, and that calling upon our own selves for strength is complete vanity, because it is calling for aid from the very enemy against whom we fight.

He puts us on guard that no war in itself is glorious, but rather its battles are marked by unwitting firing upon our own people because of our inexperience and heedlessness, by our ignorance in failing to recognize the stealthy enemy who has infiltrated our lines to destroy within, by confusion, uncertainty, distress, anxiety, deadening watches through perilous nights, with grim dawns revealing horrible evidence of the treacherous enemy who has slashed gaping wounds, even while we, in ignorance, thought ourselves most vigilant.

He admonishes us of the nearly unbearable consequences of

our dismissing part of our orders which seem to us very minor, the neglect of which causes us to miss the objective and fall into the Slough of Despond, besmirched and nearly strangled by the mud of our own sins.

Then putting aside his counseling tone, the old soldier bursts forth as though he were giving a command in the very heat of battle, "Carry the wounded to safety!" We must never give ground for the enemy's venomous accusation that the Christian church is the only army in history that shoots its own wounded. He soberly points out that there is no struggle in all our spiritual warfare more needful of

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## MY GOD SHALL SUPPLY

O, the grace our Saviour giveth,  
When the trials sore distress,  
And the path our feet must travel  
Leads through lonely wilderness.

Grace, full, free, unmeasured!  
Token of His love and care,  
Proving His own promise,  
"All thy burdens I will bear."

O, the peace our Saviour giveth,  
As we journey here below,  
In grim disappointments often,  
Mid life's sorrow, toil or woe.  
Peace past understanding!

When our mind on Him is  
stayed,  
And His Spirit whispers,  
"All thy debt the Lord hath  
paid."

O, the hope our Saviour giveth,  
Sure and steadfast in the soul,  
As with patient perseverance,  
We press onward to the goal.  
Hope that fadeth never!  
That some day His face we'll  
see.

And this sinful mortal,  
Put on immortality.

S.B., 1929

God's merciful grace than that battle against our proud and hateful hearts as we strive to obey God's command that we love one another, for Christ's sake. Here the sinful self must be utterly driven out, even as the Canaanites. He calls us to look at the spilling of Jesus' very own blood upon the ground of this earth as the ultimate and unutterable expression of perfect love, God's love for His people. How unthinkable it is that we, who have received the inestimable benefits of that love, could so desecrate it by disobeying His command to reflect that love by loving Him in response, with our love for Him being manifested by our love for our neighbor, our love even for our enemies, and especially our love for the household of the faith, laying down our very necks for our brother. He calls us to mind that God uses no greater human means of relief when the saint is in the throes of radical self destruction than that of the effective, loving concern of the brethren. They may be fearful, but they are not hesitant to place themselves close beside the suffering brother or sister, always and only in the strength of the love of God.

Then he closes his dear-bought words of wisdom by steadily looking deep into our eyes with an assurance that is otherworldly, and by declaring that the issue of the war is not the strength of the enemy, or his deadly wiles, or our powers, or our special assignments, or anything else, but alone the perfect character of our Beloved Commander, who has given us the desire to follow Him with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind, and with all our strength, by faith, to the ends of the earth, and to the end of the world, and beyond, as He wills. □



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## Search the Scriptures

Rev. Gise VanBaren

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# "Now, a Word about Myself . . ."

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In verses 12-26 of Philippians 1 the apostle Paul writes concerning his own situation. Most letter writers, understandably, will first tell about their own circumstances. Paul's concern, of course, is not to gain sympathy from the readers nor even merely to inform them concerning himself. Paul understood that the church of Philippi was worried about him — but even more so, they were concerned about the church of Christ which seemed to need Paul and his labors in their midst. Paul had been imprisoned now for almost four years: two years in Caesarea and two years in Rome. A verdict was forthcoming. Would Paul be released so that he could resume his ministry — or would he be executed?

He assures the Philippians first of all that God controls all the things which take place — and not only does He control, but He does so that His purpose might be served. The things which happened to Paul, served to the "furtherance of the gospel."

Paul's imprisonment and boldness in speaking the gospel in that situation, served to the furtherance of the gospel. This was true, first of all, in that Paul's "bonds in Christ" were manifest to "all the palace." The "palace"

could better be translated, "the praetorium," that is, the guard who kept watch over Paul. These understood that Paul's bonds were not for some criminal act, but "in Christ." This had its effect upon the guard. Some of them believed and gave expression to their faith.

There were also other brethren in Rome who were emboldened because of Paul's situation. These had evidently been fearful — concerned about the possibility of their own imprisonment. But when they observed Paul's confidence, and considered also the fact that he would possibly soon be freed, this served to encourage them in speaking out confidently too.

However, Paul recognized that not all the Christians in Rome sympathized with him. There were some preachers who proclaimed Christ — but in envy (against Paul) and strife. These were evidently jealous of Paul's popularity and recognition in the city. Though Paul was bound, there were many who admired him and sought to encourage and help him. But these jealous ones thought that Paul received too much praise. They too worked hard in the preaching of the gospel. They deserved surely as much honor as did the apostle Paul. In preaching Christ, these sought to do it in a manner that Paul would be put down. Possibly by seeking to gain the praise of men for themselves, they hoped

that Paul would suffer because of that.

Yet others, more noble, preached the same gospel out of "good will." These were not concerned with praise of men, but with preaching of the Christ. Their sole joy in this life was to set forth the cross of atonement.

Paul was not going to enter into this type of fray. He rejoiced that by both detractors as well as admirers, Christ was preached. This was true whether the preaching was in pretense or in truth.

The apostle was encouraged too through the prayers of the Philippians and the blessings of the Spirit upon him in all of his trial. Even as he himself constantly prayed God's blessings upon the Philippians, he knew that they also had him in their own prayers. And God used all of this to work toward the final deliverance, salvation, of Paul.

Paul's great concern was that Christ would be "magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death." Whatever might happen to Paul, he was assured that it was to the glory of God and the honor of his Lord Jesus Christ. He could be bold, even now in bonds, knowing that this would be to the praise of his Savior.

Then follows the familiar confession of verse 21. Paul insists that to "live is Christ and to die is gain." Whatever may happen to him, Paul is convinced that it is for good. To remain on this earth

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



"is Christ." In life he could preach the gospel, comfort the saints, build up the church of Christ. He would be encouraged and led by the Spirit of the Son. Life would be the means of serving His God. But to die would be "gain." Then he would be delivered from the sufferings of this life. No more would he be oppressed by wicked men nor imprisoned for Jesus' sake. He could fellowship with his Lord and with the saints of God who had been made perfect. To die would truly be gain.

What would Paul personally prefer? The fact that he emphasizes that death is "gain" would surely indicate that Paul saw that as far better. Death would be the "doorway" to eternal glory. But there are other factors which must be weighed. There is the need to continue on

## A SONG OF PRAISE

I may not understand, dear Lord,  
How I can see,  
When others' eyes are closed.  
They have  
No sight of Thee.

I may not know how thou hast  
filled  
My heart with love;  
When others' hearts are empty of  
Joy from above.

One fact I know — the blood of  
Christ  
Was shed for me.  
He bore my sins, my Substitute,  
Upon the tree.

Tis all of grace, no merit mine,  
I'll humbly praise  
Thee, blessed Redeemer, King  
divine,  
Through all my days.

For boundless mercies,  
undeserved,  
I thank thee, Lord.  
Oh! Jesus! May'st thou ever be  
Alone adored.

—S.B., 1929

this earth in order to provide for ministry to the church. Paul could understand very well that the churches, established only a few years before, still needed the strong hand of guidance he could provide. To abide in the flesh was more needful for them.

So Paul was in a "strait betwixt two." One can understand the difficulty. His interest in the church and his desire to help that church to the best of his ability would be reason to remain. And Paul is convinced that this is what will happen too. God will do that which is the very best for His church. There is need that the apostle help them to grow in their faith and the joy of that faith.

That is also what took place. Shortly after the epistle was written, Paul was freed and continued his labors for a number of years. God had work for Paul to do — and after that was finished, Paul could be with His Lord in heaven to enjoy that which is far better.

### QUESTIONS:

1. Explain how the things which happened to Paul were indeed to the "furtherance of the gospel."
2. Do all those things which happen to children of God also work for the furtherance of the gospel? If so, how? If not, why not?
3. Do trials and other adversities work more towards the furtherance of the gospel than do more pleasant events?
4. If trials work to the "furtherance of the gospel," ought we not to desire these things?
5. What is the idea of "bonds in Christ"? vs. 13.
6. In what ways did Paul's bonds encourage others to become bolder?
7. What can you say of the two kinds of preaching men-

tioned in verses 15 and 16? How must we account for this? Can this still occur today?

8. How could these sinful preachers "add affliction" to Paul's bonds?
9. How could Paul rejoice when Christ is preached "in pretence"? Does not this position allow for false teachers in the church?
10. What does Paul mean in verse 20 when he states, "Christ shall be magnified in my body"? Can we say this concerning ourselves too?
11. Paul mentions the prayers of the Philippians in verse 19. Did Paul also pray for the Philippians? Ought we to pray for one another? Is there special need to pray for preachers of the gospel?
12. How can we say of ourselves: To live is Christ, to die is gain?
13. Did Paul have greater reason to desire the heavenly than we do?
14. If death is such great gain, why do we not seek it? Do we not rather cling to this life with all possible means? Is this not wrong?
15. In verse 22 Paul mentions his "flesh." What does he mean by that? In what different senses is this word used in Scripture (see a concordance).
16. Discuss the "strait" in which Paul found himself.
17. Could we also insist that it is more needful for ourselves to remain? How do we know when that "need" ceases?
18. On what basis does Paul conclude that he must remain? What would be the fruit of that for the Philippians?
19. What is the cause for the rejoicing of the Philippians when Paul comes to them? ☐



## Guest Article

Rev. Kenneth Hanko

# Report on Work in Northern Ireland

The name of the Covenant Reformed Fellowship is not new to the readers of *The Standard Bearer*. Synod of 1988 decided to send a delegation to Larne to help the saints there. Rev. Kamps and Prof. Engelsma went and the report of their visit is found in the December 15, 1988 issue. It gives a brief history of the fellowship, and details of the visits and work of the delegates.

Synod also decided to instruct the Committee for Contact "to secure the labors of one of our ministers to work in Larne and to pursue, if possible, other contacts in the British Isles, for a period of 6-9 months."

In January 1989 the Committee for Contact asked me to go, and shortly afterward the elders of the PRC in Norristown gave their permission. Though the congregation in Norristown had just been organized, the elders felt that the work of the PRC in the UK was too important, and the need of the Covenant Reformed Fellowship too great, to refuse.

The spiritual condition of Northern Ireland is probably a little better than the spiritual condition of our own country. For example, most stores and shops are closed on the Lord's Day. It is difficult to buy bread or meat in the supermarkets on Monday because little baking and butchering are

done the day before. It seemed to me also that there was a greater emphasis on the necessity of separation from the world. Nevertheless this does not mean that the spiritual condition of that country is good. The older Presbyterian churches are liberal. The Free Presbyterian Church, which was started by Rev. Ian Paisley, is more fundamentalistic than Presbyterian, and in fact has close ties in both doctrine and practice with the fundamentalists of North America. The more conservative Presbyterian churches, such as the Reformed Presbyterian Church and the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, have adopted for the most part the theology of the free offer of the gospel and common grace. The Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, to which denomination the Bible Presbyterian Church of

Larne now belongs, is legalistic. Historic Calvinism is not much more appreciated there than here.

It was because of this that the Covenant Reformed Fellowship decided not to affiliate itself with any of the churches already existing in Northern Ireland, but instead to seek the help of the Protestant Reformed Churches.

The Fellowship began to meet in January of 1988, and until I arrived in July of 1989 listened to taped sermons of Protestant Reformed ministers. Many of the people indicated to me that they were very thankful to have this means of instruction, but that it was, nevertheless, far from ideal. It was much more difficult for the children to listen and learn in that situation than when a minister of the word was present. Furthermore they were



Covenant Reformed Fellowship, Larne, N. Ireland

Rev. Hanko is pastor of the Protestant Reformed Church of Norristown, Pennsylvania.



somewhat hesitant about inviting visitors to the worship.

The church has two worship services every Sabbath: at 11:00 a.m. (a late morning service is customary in Northern Ireland), and 6:00 p.m. In the morning I preached a series on the life of Jacob, and in the evening I preached from the Heidelberg Catechism, because the people had expressed a desire for instruction in Reformed doctrine, and especially in the doctrine of the covenant. Their worship is very simple: singing of three or four Psalms, prayer, reading and preaching of the Word, and giving of alms.

Already before my arrival the people of the fellowship began to plan various things in addition to the weekly services. I conducted family visitation at their request. Catechism classes for the children were begun almost immediately. Since there are fourteen children among the five families who attend regularly it was necessary to have four classes: one for the five four to six years olds, one for the eight year old, one for the twelve year old, and one for the two fifteen year olds.

In October we began public meetings in the Larne town hall. The lecture topics were on various aspects of Reformed doctrine (e.g., infant baptism, the covenant, and Premillennialism) and current issues (the application of the doctrine of the anti-

thesis to contemporary life, the role of women in the church, etc.). We had visitors at every meeting, and three people from outside the fellowship attended these meetings regularly. Two of them, young people who drove an hour in order to be present, requested catechism. I began to teach them from the Belgic Confession on Friday evenings before the lectures. The ladies had a Bible study which met every other week, and in November we began a study of the application of the doctrine of the covenant to the raising of children.

We met five nights in a row in early September to discuss the work and qualifications of the officers of the church. The fellowship is very eager to be organized, and is preparing for it now though we do not know when it will be.

If the spiritual condition of Northern Ireland is poor, then the spiritual condition of England is appalling. Only a small part of the population goes to church, and of these most are members of the apostate Church of England. There are only a few Reformed or Presbyterian churches in the whole country, and those few people who still hold to the Reformed faith are often unable to find a Reformed church to attend.

I made two visits to England. The first was with my family in August. We did some sight-seeing, but also visited with three

families to talk about the possibility of a Reformed work in England.

Out of this visit came the plans for a conference of interested men at which this idea would be discussed. Just before we left, fifteen men (five from Larne, four from the Measbro Dyke Evangelical Church in Barnsley, and the rest from various parts of England) met in Barnsley. We were able to meet for only a few hours, and so were not able to accomplish as much as we would have liked, but we did agree to meet again in May 1990 to talk further. At the conference Mr. Tony Horne, editor of *The Presbyterian*, outlined the reasons for the calling of the conference and suggested some objectives toward which the group can work. I spoke on what it means to be Reformed, and Mr. John Clarke talked about the work in Larne. We also had some time for discussion and fellowship. At the meeting in May one of the subjects discussed will probably be the adoption of one of the Reformed creeds.

Though we had to return to America earlier than we had originally planned, we are very thankful for the opportunity we had to serve God's people in the United Kingdom, and feel even more strongly now than we did before we went that this work is so important that we must be willing to make large sacrifices in order that it may go on. □

*From Holy Writ*  
Rev. George Lubbers

## Exposition of Isaiah 6 (1)

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

### The Vision of the Throne of God in the Temple

"In the year that Uzziah died I

saw the Lord (Adonai) upon the throne, high and lifted up, and his train (skirts) filled the



temple."

It is of utmost importance for a correct interpretation of this beautiful chapter to notice that we are here dealing with a divine theophany, which Isaiah saw at a very critical point in the history of the coming of the Son of God to save all His people from their sins. God appeared here as the God of all glory at the close of the long reign of king Uzziah. This king reigned for 52 years in Jerusalem on David's throne. He reigned in what is known as the Southern Kingdom, in distinction from the Northern Kingdom, the ten tribes. The capital city of this kingdom was Samaria. The country was therefore often simply called "Samaria."

The kingdom of David stands here at the crossroads of her history under David's royal scepter. We must bear this in mind. God had promised David that He would build him a house, and that his son would sit upon David's throne forever (II Sam. 7:14, 15). But now, at the time of Uzziah's death, God is sending His judgments upon the kings of Judah and Jerusalem, which seem to indicate that the Lord's word of oath will need to fail.

It is after the death of Uzziah that this great decline in Judah will come to a speedy manifestation. The royal throne will be broken down, the temple will be burned, and Israel shall become the laughingstock among all the heathen nations.

However, it will only be such seemingly. Even in these darkest hours of Israel, the just will live by faith which is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen!

Behold, a remnant shall be saved; there will be manifestation of greater things in the BRANCH, the very Son of God, born from a virgin. Such is the beautiful perspective symbolized here in the vision of the throne, whence

is heard the TRIS HAGION from the lips of the Seraphim standing before the throne of the majesty on high. Jehovah Adonai sitteth on the throne in serene majesty even in the darkest hours of the seventy years of cruel captivity in Babylon!

Such is the beautiful prophetic perspective symbolized here!

We should notice that this revelation of God's throne, high and lifted up, is in the temple where God meets His people at the mercy-seat, the Ark of the testimony. There mercy is proclaimed; justice and mercy kiss each other there. Hence, Jehovah will never forsake His people, whom He foreknew (Rom. 11:2-7). He will dwell in the midst of His people forever. Such is the clear message of the Gospel of the glory of the blessed God in Isaiah 6:1ff.! God will surely make, out of the remnant according to the election of grace, a holy people, a royal priesthood. He will purify their hearts. Embazoned here in this theophanic vision is this: "I the LORD change not; therefore ye are not consumed." I will bring greater things to pass only for my great NAME'S sake (Ez. 36:20-23; 39:7, 16, 25; 43:7, 8; Mal. 3:6).

The Seraphim beings about the throne symbolize in their very name and place the Holiness to the Lord, as this was written in letters of pure gold, in the engravings of a signet HOLINESS TO THE LORD. This was worn by the high priest in his priestly mitre. This Israel was accepted before the Lord (Ex. 26:36-38)! This is the theme of the eternal anthem of the Seraphim: HOLY, HOLY, HOLY IS JEHOVAH OF HOSTS. The whole earth is full of God's glory (vs. 3). Here is a visionary manifestation of the glory of the Son of Man, who through His death and resurrection will bring in the great tabernacle of God dwelling with man. Indeed,

the whole earth will then be filled with the glory of God! There is prophecy in this vision of the Lord upon His throne as it shall be established in righteousness forever (John 12:31, 32).

What a sharp contrast is here symbolized between the sovereign manifestation of Jehovah and the vain gods of the reprobate kings, priests, and prophets in Israel! Yes, in this very temple they introduced all the idol gods of the nations; they perpetrated the great ABOMINATION (Deut. 7:26; 1:9-13; Ez. 8:6, 9, 13, 15, 17, etc.)! When we read the great apology of Stephen before the Jewish Council in Jerusalem, we hear him quote the sin-convicting words quoted from the prophet of Tekoa, Amos 5:25-27 (read this passage, by all means). One cannot read such passages from the lips of the prophets without trembling in awe before the song of the Seraphim before the great throne of God in Jesus Christ His Son!

#### **The Effect of Such Overwhelming Glory upon the Prophet Isaiah (vss. 4, 5)**

We read here: "And the foundations of the threshold shook at the voice of him that cried, and the house (temple) was filled with smoke. Then said I, woe is me! for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the king: Jehovah of Hosts!"

Isaiah's cry, "I am undone," reminds us of the words of Moses which he uttered when the LORD appeared in the glory at Sinai. We read in Hebrews 12:21, "and so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake." All that Peter had to see from out of his fishing boat was the great catch of fish, and he exclaimed, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." Let us then too take the shoes



from off our feet at so great a manifestation of Jehovah's glory. Nay, let us draw nigh and see this great sight in the face of Jesus Christ our Lord by the transforming power of a glory which changes us from glory unto glory as by the Spirit of the Lord (II Cor. 3:17, 18).

For the gospel-truth stands as spoken by the glorified Son of Man, which He spoke to John on the isle of Patmos: "Fear not, I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. I have the keys of hell and death."

But only when a sinner's conscience has been purified by redeeming grace can he be fearless before the great and glorious Christ. Isaiah needed such a pure heart and clean tongue. This Isaiah sought when the foundations of the threshold of the temple shook at the voice of the Lord from His holy throne, high and lifted up. He is himself a sinner and he dwells amongst a "people of unclean lips." They all need cleansing. No, not merely

the cleansings of many washings required by the Levitical ordinances, but the cleansing of the tongue, which proceeds from a pure heart (Ps. 19:14). God's promise is that He will make Israel truly a holy nation, a royal people, who have their lips purified by the holy fire of the Spirit of sanctification. Thus there will be fruit of the lips (Heb. 13:15).

God in His pity from where He dwells between the Cherubim upon the mercy-seat causes Isaiah to obtain grace and to find mercy in his (Isaiah's) great hour of need.

We read in verses 6 and 7, "Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar" and he laid it upon my mouth, and said, "*Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.*" These are very wonderful words which only the Christ on the throne could utter efficaciously. They are the equivalent of what Jesus spoke to the man sick of the palsy: "Son, be of good cheer;

thy sins are forgiven thee" (Matt. 9:4b). Yes, the heavy burden of the poor sinner's heart rolled away. Thus also Isaiah can now say, "I believe, therefore I speak." The live coal was taken with a tong from off the great altar where the sacrifice was brought for the expiation of sin, and sprinkled upon the mercy-seat. It was the type of the blood of Jesus, which speaks better things than Abel. It was the witness of God that He will remove all our sins in the blood of the Lamb who was slain before the foundation of the world. For this throne, high and lifted up, is the throne of God and of the Lamb (John 12:41; Rev. 5:6, 7, 8, 9, 13). These live coals are life-giving coals from the Christ who was to be slain and to live forever. In this light we can understand the beautiful words, "*Lo, this hath touched thy lips, thine iniquity is taken away and thy sin purged*": you are both justified and sanctified in the LORD THY RIGHTEOUSNESS (Jer. 23:6; 33:16). □

(to be continued)

## The End Times (2):

# The Sign of Divorcing the Truth

## The Strength of Youth

Rev. Barrett Gritters

No, we cannot know the day and the hour that Jesus is coming again to make all things new. We can't know when He will return to take the church to glory. We may not try to determine the day

*Rev. Gritters is pastor of the Protestant Reformed Church of Byron Center, Michigan.*

or even the year. But, you say, if we cannot pinpoint the time the Lord will come, is there any profit in studying about those days, and even asking how close they are? Definitely, yes! It's not for nothing that the Bible gives us information about the end times, even details. Even though you cannot know the day and the

hour, there are many things we know about the times shortly before the return of Christ.

Many young people have probably spoken to those who believe that there will be no warnings as to when the end will be, and that Christ will return without notice to rapture the church from the earth. These



people misinterpret the "thief in the night" idea (see last article), and argue that all the "signs of the times" in the Scripture refer to when Jerusalem was destroyed in A.D. 70, and not to the end of the world. The error of this reasoning is that in Matthew 24:2 the disciples *ask* about both (the destruction of Jerusalem and the coming of Christ's kingdom); and the Lord gives *instruction* about both (even a careful study of the rest of the chapter is not necessary to see this).

So we take a middle road here. Although we cannot predict the day and hour of Jesus' return, we know that it will not be a complete surprise for believers. We don't say that there are no signs of His coming and of the end of the world. Jesus wants the church on earth to live with her eyes wide open, with her ear to the ground, listening carefully for the hoofbeat of the coming of Jesus to judge, so that she may be spiritually ready when He comes. And He says, "These are the things I want you to look for and listen for . . . ."

One of the most subtle, devastating, and grievous signs that the Lord says we should anticipate is a massive departure from the faith, a great departure like the world has never seen. "Be not deceived," Jesus says through His apostle, "for that day shall not come, except there be a falling away first, and that man of sin, the son of perdition be revealed." In other words, this sign will be present in the entire New Testament, but especially it will accompany the coming of the Antichrist himself.

*Apostasy* is the word for it. Apostasy is the great evil of putting away the faith. Just as a man puts away his wife, divorcing her, so men and women put away the faith, divorcing it. The Bible even uses a similar word for both. That a man divorces the

truth doesn't mean that he once believed but now doesn't, or that some elect "divorced" the faith. But it means that some who held the truth of the faith no longer want it. They used to teach the truth about Jesus Christ, about His manhood, about His Godhead, about His creating the world, about His election, about His preservation of us, about His rule in the church through office-bearers. But they don't want it any longer. They never truly believed.

The seriousness is that it is departure from and divorcing of Christ, for Christ is the truth of the Scripture.

Practically, this means that this sign of apostasy takes place in what *was* the true church. We don't call Buddhists or Mohammedans apostates. Apostasy happens in the church, where the faith was preached, learned, and loved. Paul says to the elders at Ephesus, "Of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." That is, "Out of your own people . . . ."

Very practically, young people, that's why you must be so careful in your learning of catechism lessons. *You* and your friends will be the elders and elders' wives some day in the church. In these latter days, especially the elders need to know sound doctrine, so that when the ministers or professors bring in false teaching, they will know it.

A serious-minded young person will ask, "How could this ever happen in a true church? If the people loved the Lord, taught the Lord's truth, obeyed the Lord's commandments, how can that same church now teach and believe the lie?" The answer is that both the leaders and the members in the church sin to bring this about.

The leaders (some of whom may be unbelievers), because of

intellectual pride and hatred for what cannot be explained logically, subtly and slowly teach the lie. The professors in the schools raise subtle questions without giving good, conclusive answers, causing gnawing doubts in the minds and hearts of students. The ministers come to the pulpits with the same questioning methods. Instead of saying from the pulpit, "Thus saith the Lord" they say, "Let me suggest to you . . . ."

And the leaders' punishment for this apostasy will be great. Just as the great sin of Jeroboam the son of Nebat was not so much that he served idols, but especially that he "taught the people to sin," so the judgment of God will fall most heavily upon these heretics, not only because of their own unbelief, but especially because of all the sheep they led astray.

But that's not the only way this happens. For the teachers to bring in damnable heresies, the people must be willing and ready

#### Questions for discussion:

1. In what ways is the Reformed faith being gradually undermined today?
2. What should you do if you believe the teacher in your school (high school or college) is indirectly undermining the truth, or if he subtly mocks the Reformed faith?
3. A church does not become false overnight. What difference is there between a church that is corrupting the truth and a church that is a false church? (for further study, see *The Standard Bearer*, March 1, 1982).
4. If apostasy must come before Christ returns, what should our *attitude* and *action* be when we face it?



to swallow them. Peter says, "Many shall follow their pernicious ways." The members of the church, then, must either be just as willing to divorce the truth, or know nothing about what the truth is. If the members of the church would rise in holy horror immediately, and not after two or three generations; if the church members were willing to discipline the preachers and professors who teach heresy; the false doctrines would be kept out of the church.

The problem is that the church members sometimes care more about their own hide than about the truth of the Word of God, put a greater value on "peace in the church" than on Christ's Word. We need to be men and women and young people who care about the faith of Jesus Christ, the head and ruler and Savior of the church.

But how can this happen in a church that consists of believers and their children? How can God's elect divorce the truth? God's elect cannot divorce the truth. But a true church can become apostate. And for that to happen, two things must occur. First, there must be unbelievers in the congregation as well as believers. Bringing in "damnable heresies," these unbelievers are the wolves among the sheep, who do a good job of pretending to be believers. But this alone isn't enough. There must be believers who fail in one important aspect of their calling: to teach their children well. For then the children will listen to the lies that are taught and will begin themselves to question the Reformed faith because they were not taught it. And because the lie is always easier to swallow than the truth, they will take it, morsel by poisonous morsel. The parents are saved, but the children perish. The church that once was true, now is false.

This doesn't happen overnight.

Think of it in this way. When a train comes to a switching yard and transfers to a track that will eventually turn the train around, the change seems innocent enough. But after a short time of uneasiness because of the lurch to the other track, it is not bothersome to find out that it's going in a slightly different direction. In fact, it probably will seem natural and comfortable enough; and soon the train will be going in the opposite direction and no one will either know or care.

At first, the lies that are being taught sound dangerous. Reformed and biblical sensitivities are touched. The parents feel guilty, perhaps, when they don't object. But then, after they have argued with and eventually ignored their conscience for a while, it doesn't bother them anymore. Perhaps they are believers who will be saved, but because of their horrible failure in this one vital area, their children will believe the lie and teach it when they become old. And God will cut off their generations. What an astounding thought!

We need to be warned about this in our own lives.

This, young people, is why you need to be encouraged to study hard in catechism, to learn the doctrines. This is why your pastors are so concerned when you don't know and understand the questions and answers, when your eyes are a mile away in catechism. And this is why your pastor is so thrilled when you know the lesson, when you show interest during the class — because he sees evidence that God will preserve the church perhaps for another generation. And this is the fervent desire of his heart, for God's sake!

But don't think that it's all so innocent. God's apostles tell us that when heresy comes into the

church it comes as intentional deception (except for those leaders and teachers who have been deceived themselves for a while). Paul tells Timothy that the divorce of the faith will come when men speak "lies in hypocrisy" (I Timothy 4:2). They will put on a false front of orthodoxy to make you think they are not crooked. They are wolves in sheep's clothing. Intentionally their doctrine is cloaked in Reformed terminology; intentionally they will claim to have history on their side; but their purpose is to destroy the church.

That's hard to believe. But the devil himself is behind this deception. They are smooth-talking, kind men; but they are nothing less than demonic. Freshly manicured personalities may be the serpent from the garden of Eden. Eve was not struck by the serpent's falsity, but by his apparent sincerity. Smooth as silk. Slippery as a snake. "Sincere."

But their purpose is to destroy the church.

Young people, you must be reminded of these things. A minister is not faithful if he does not teach the congregation about this. "If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ . . ." (I Timothy 4:6). The coming again of Jesus Christ will be preceded by this horrible departure from the faith that you hold dear. Beware!

Learn.

Study.

Be not deceived.

Pray.

And when you hear the lie, speak.

"Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen." □



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## Contribution

Mr. Henry De Jong

# Abortion and Evolution

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Much in the news, in recent months, is the practice of abortion for hire. The secular world is steaming with unbelieving fear, fear that the "fundamental right to abort" may be limited by the recent Supreme Court decision in *Webster*.

According to published reports in the Reformed press, some faculty members of Calvin College teach the theory of evolution as true, contrary to the biblical doctrine of creation. A question may therefore be asked: Can a faculty member who teaches evolution as true consistently stand against abortion? If so, is there other biblical basis, anchored in God's revealing of Himself, that consistently stands

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*Mr. De Jong is a confessing member of the Protestant Reformed Church in South Holland, IL. He is a law-student of Valparaiso University, Valparaiso, IN.*

over against the practitioner of abortion for hire?

The strongest, best, most biblical stance against abortion, infanticide, and euthanasia is the historical truth that God created a deathless world. If one denies biblical creation, one opens the door to justified or excused killing, both legally and morally, in Reformed circles. For the biblical doctrine of creation reveals that Jehovah is the sole Author of life, because He alone is the sole Author of creation. Because Jehovah is the sole Author of life, He alone has the right to control the processes of life and death. Therefore the biblical doctrine of creation reveals that Jehovah alone has the right to control the processes of life and death. But the theory of evolution teaches that God is not the sole Author of life, because God is not the sole Author of creation. If God is not the sole Author of life, then He

alone does not have the right to control the processes of life and death. Therefore the theory of evolution teaches that God alone does not have the right to control the processes of life and death. But who then controls the processes of life and death? Evolution appears to posit one answer, the humanistic answer that might makes right, that the weak therefore have no human rights. As a consequence, we may assert that to weaken the biblical doctrine of creation by teaching evolution as true in the circle of Reformed believers weakens the Reformed pro-life stance.

The theory of evolution is used, at many law schools today, to justify and excuse abortion for hire. This is so because no qualitative difference exists between justifying or excusing evolution in a science course at Calvin and

*(con't. on page 214)*

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Mr. Jon Huiskens

## Report of Classis East

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January 10, 1990  
Hope Protestant Reformed Church

Classis East met in regular session on Wednesday, January 10, 1990 at the Hope Protestant Reformed Church, Grand Rapids.

Each church was represented by two delegates. Rev. G. Van Baren served as chairman of this session. Present at this session, at least for a short time, was the church history class of Covenant Christian High School.

Reports were received from the stated clerk, the classical committee, and from the church

visitors. The only churches visited this past year were Norristown and Covenant. The report regarding these visits was treated in closed session and therefore the actions of classis can not be reported here.

One of the major items for classis' consideration was an overture to synod from Rev. K.



Hanko to compile a completely new psalter. This overture was sent to synod with the disapproval of classis on the grounds (summarized) (1) that an entirely new psalter is not necessary and (2) that such a project would not be wise with respect to our people and for the spiritual harmony of our churches.

Classis also heard appeals from two brothers against their consistory. Classis decided that the appeals were not finished in the consistory and therefore declared them not legally before the classis.

One other overture to synod was received from a brother regarding synod's action with regard to a matter brought to an earlier synod. Classis decided that this overture was not legally before it since it judged the overture to be an appeal and therefore illegal in that appeals must appear at the very next synod. The overture will be sent to synod with this decision.

The January classis is the time when classis does its voting for positions on committees and for synodical delegates. Rev. M. Joostens was elected to a three-year *primus* term and Rev. K.

Koole to a three-year *secundus* term as delegates *ad examina*. Rev. W. Bruinsma was elected to serve a three-year term on the classical committee. Rev. J. Kortering and Rev. G. Van Baren were elected to serve as church visitors, with Revs. Woudenberg and Slopsema as alternates. The following delegates to synod were elected: **MINISTERS:** *Primi:* M. Joostens, J. Kortering, J. Slopsema, G. Van Baren; *Secundi:* W. Bruinsma, B. Gritters, M. Kamps, K. Koole. **ELDERS:** *Primi:* C. Kregel, C. Kuiper (SW), D. Lotterman, G. Terpstra; *Secundi:* G. Boverhof, H. Kuiper, Sr., C. Pastoor, R. Pastoor.

Expressions of thanks to the classis were given by Faith and Norristown for the pulpit supply given them in their vacancies.

Subsidy requests were approved for 1991 for Kalamazoo for \$6500 and for Covenant for \$28,000.

Expenses for this session of classis amounted to \$1612.49.

Classis will meet next in Kalamazoo on Wednesday, May 9, 1990.

Respectfully submitted,  
John J. Huisken,  
Stated Clerk □

## CONTRIBUTION (con't. from page 213)

justifying or excusing *Roe v. Wade* in a constitutional law course at, say, Harvard Law School. The denial of creation causes the spirits of men to justify and excuse both evolution and its deathly practice in the abortuary.

In opposing abortion for hire within the circle of believers, citizens of the kingdom of heaven do well to contemplate the voice of Isaiah the prophet: "O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God! Behold, the Lord God will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him. He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young." Isaiah 40:9-11. □

# News From Our Churches

Mr. Benjamin Wigger

February 1, 1990

## CONGREGATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

The Choral Society of the Faith P.R.C. in Jenison, MI presented a

*Mr. Wigger is a member of the Protestant Reformed Church of Hudsonville, Michigan.*

Candlelight Christmas Concert after their evening service on Christmas Eve, December 24. Please correct me if I am wrong, but this is the first time that I can remember any of our choral groups presenting a candlelight concert. And what a wonderful

concert that was. What a great way to begin the celebration of the birth of our Lord and Savior the following day.

On December 20 the Choral Society of the Lynden P.R.C. in Lynden, WA presented their Thanksgiving/Christmas Concert. A variety of old and new music



was performed.

The Council of the First P.R.C. in Grand Rapids decided to reactivate a five-year old plan to micro-film the important parts of their archives. Some of their minute-books are already in sorry condition, because they sustained water damage in the old archives room in their church on Franklin St. Most of the writings are however still legible. So the Council feels they should do whatever they can to preserve for posterity what they still have. Especially is that the case because the records of First Church are important not only to them as a congregation, but also in our denomination.

The Council of the Hull P.R.C. in Hull, Iowa proposed to install air conditioning in their present building. This proposal was rejected by Hull's congregation at their annual congregational meeting held in December, not exactly a warm month.

On Sunday evening, December 3, all the members of Discussion Groups in the Hope P.R.C. in Walker, MI were invited to meet together at their church for a short program followed by singing and refreshments.

Sunday, December 17, the Choral Society of the Loveland P.R.C. in Loveland, CO presented their Christmas Concert to their congregation. Looking at the program, there was one special number that caught my attention: "Orchestra Bells." There was also a special note of thanks from Loveland's consistory to all who helped to re-shingle the roof of the old church.

Somewhat similar to the above, there were quite a few announcements in the bulletins of the Hope P.R.C. in Redlands, CA during the month of December regarding parsonage clean-up for Rev. den Hartog and his family. Early in the month, congregation members were encouraged to

come prepared for general cleaning, painting, wall-papering, and yard clean-up. Evidently this work went on throughout the month, up until the den Hartogs arrived.

Prof. R. Decker and his wife spent two Sundays in Redlands. Not only did Prof. Decker preach for the congregation, but on December 31 he installed Rev. den Hartog as Redlands' pastor.

A Welcome Program for Rev. den Hartog and family was held on January 5.

#### **DENOMINATIONAL NEWS**

One of our emeritus ministers, Rev. Robert Harbach, continues to suffer from the effects of Parkinson's Disease. He finds it more and more difficult to walk, and consequently he no longer can get out and about.

The congregation of the Grandville P.R.C. in Grandville, MI where Rev. and Mrs. Harbach are members, have been providing the Harbachs with assistance. Members come and stay for a period of time, allowing Mrs. Harbach to get out and get groceries or whatever. I know I've mentioned it before, but find some time to drop the Harbachs a card or note. It would mean so much. Their address is 3409 Goodman, Wyoming, MI 49509.

#### **SCHOOL ACTIVITIES**

"Christ the Anointed" was the theme of the Christmas Program presented by the Loveland P.R. Christian School in Loveland, CO.

And the students of the South Holland, IL P.R. Christian School presented their annual Christmas program entitled, "The Mind of Christ: He Humbled Himself."

#### **MINISTERIAL CALLS**

God in His providence has led Rev. S. Houck to accept the call extended to him by the congregation of the Peace P.R.C. in Lynwood, IL.

The Consistory of the Byron Center P.R.C. in Byron Center, MI has decided not to release

their pastor, Rev. B. Gritters, for a period of one year, so that he could have been sent to Burnie, Tasmania.

May God in His grace also continue to provide according to the need in our churches, and for the saints in Tasmania as well. □

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#### **RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY**

The consistory and congregation of Grandville Protestant Reformed Church expresses its sincere sympathy to Mr. Henry Kuiper, Mr. and Mrs. Richard Peterson, Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Corson, in the death of their father, MR. JACOB KUIPER.

"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 heaven." (II Cor. 5:1)

Pastor Jason Korterling  
Tom Bodbyl, Clerk

#### **ANNOUNCEMENT**

The Protestant Reformed Christian School of South Holland, Illinois, is in need of several teachers for the 1990-1991 school year. Please contact Mr. Lamm Lubbers (16535 Elm Court, South Holland, IL 60473; [708] 339-6585), administrator, or Mr. Bert Worries, Jr. (18757 Bernadine St., Lansing, IL 60438; [708] 474-4926), Board Secretary.

#### **RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY**

The Sr. Mr. and Mrs. Society of Faith Protestant Reformed Church extends heartfelt sympathy to Mr. and Mrs. John Hoekstra and family in the death of her father, MR. JACOB KUIPER, SR.

May they find comfort with the words of Psalm 16:11. "Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore."

Jenison, MI



# NOTICE

Classis West of the Protestant Reformed Churches will meet in South Holland, Illinois, on Wednesday, March 7, 1990, at 8:30 AM, the Lord willing. All material for the Agenda is to be in the hands of the Stated Clerk, 30 days before Classis convenes. All delegates in need of lodging or transportation from the airport should notify the Clerk of South Holland's Consistory using the forms provided for that purpose.

Rev. R. Hanks, Stated Clerk

# RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Men's Society of Hope Protestant Reformed Church of Walker, MI mourns the death of one of its members, MR. JACOB KUIPER, SR. We extend Christian sympathy to his brothers-in-

law, Mr. Richard Bloem and Mr. Peter Petroelje, and to Mrs. Kuiper and her family.

"The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms."

(Deuteronomy 33:27)

Dewey Engelsma, Pres.  
Arnold Dykstra, Sec.

# ANNOUNCEMENT

The Northwest Iowa Protestant Reformed Christian School of Doon, Iowa, is in need of one teacher for grades 3, 4, 5 for the 1990-1991 school year. Please contact Mr. Chester Hunter (106 5th Ave., Doon, IA 51235; [712] 726-3381), administrator, or Mr. Robert Mantel (RR 2, Box 92, Hull, IA 51239; [712] 726-3478), Board President.

# RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Ladies Society of Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church expresses sincere sympathy to one of its members, Mrs. Freda Zwak, in the loss of her brother, MR. ERNIE MIEDEMA.

"The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." (Job 1:21)

Rev. G. VanBaren, President  
Mrs. G. VanBaren, Secretary

# IN MEMORIAM

On December 31, 1989, our beloved husband, father, grandfather, and great-grandfather, JACOB KUIPER, SR. was taken from his earthly family and called to his heavenly home at the age of 78.

Though we sorrow, we can rejoice knowing that for many years he dedicated his life to the spreading of the word through the tape ministry. We pray that the godly example he set before his family and the church will remain in our hearts. May we be comforted in the knowledge that our loved one now rests safely in the eternal care of God.

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in Thee." (Isaiah 26:3)

Cornelia Kuiper  
Henry J. Kuiper  
Ike & Jane Kuiper  
Jay & Nan Kuiper  
Ger & Bonnie Kuiper  
Bob & Etta VanDyke  
Clare & Jan Kuiper  
Al & Sharon Brummel  
Art & Mary Bleyenbergh  
John & Marie Hoekstra  
Rich & Betty Peterson  
Bob & Laurie Kuiper  
Ron & Linda Corson  
54 grandchildren  
9 great-grandchildren

Hope PRC, Walker, MI

# CONFERENCE ON PREACHING

March 6, 1990

South Holland Protestant  
Reformed Church  
16511 South Park Ave.  
South Holland, Illinois

9:00 AM — Keynote Address:

"The Reformed View of Preaching" . . . . . Prof. Robert Decker

10:30 AM — Sectionals:

"Organization and Homiletics" . . . . . Rev. Ronald Hanks

"Preaching from the Old Testament" . . . . . Rev. John A. Heys

"Heidelberg Catechism Preaching" . . . . . Rev. Ronald Cammenga

1:00 PM — Sectionals:

"The Importance and Improving of Delivery" . Rev. Gise VanBaren

"The Elders' Oversight of the Preaching" . . . Prof. Herman Hanks

"Missionary Preaching" . . . . . Rev. Wilbur Bruinsma

3:00 AM — Sectionals:

"Series Preaching" . . . . . Rev. M. Kamps

"Preaching as Teaching" . . . . . Rev. Thomas Miersma

"Applicatory Preaching" . . . . . Rev. C. Haak

Coffee breaks and noon dinner will be provided.