

# *THE* **STANDARD BEARER**

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*A Reformed  
Semi-Monthly  
Magazine*



## **Davidson College Presbyterian Church:**

site of the Fifth Colloquium on Calvin Studies

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Vol. 66, No. 11  
March 1, 1990

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## In This Issue . . .

The last Directory of our churches to be printed in *The Standard Bearer* appeared, I think, nearly two years ago. Since the information it provides is hardly anymore current, we have included an update in this issue.

What purpose does the Directory serve? For those who regularly receive a copy of the "Acts of Synod and Yearbook" . . . probably not much. But it may be helpful for other of our readers. It was suggested to us, in fact, by a very active member of one of our Evangelism Committees, that other committees which are responsible for mailing out tracts might want to include a copy of the Directory in the packet. Given the easy accessibility of copy machines today, it certainly wouldn't be difficult at all to do that. We pass the idea along, at any rate, for what you think it's worth.

\* \* \* \* \*

Sometimes articles which once appeared in the *S.B.* are reprinted in booklet or book form. More often than not, however, the old articles are lost to all who do not have access to the bound volumes. And those are hard to come by. Recently however we were given a set of the oldest volumes, with the suggestion that we cut off the binding, make Xerox copies of the pages, and then bind them, thus making the one set multiply so as to be able to supply others who might have an interest in obtaining the old issues. That's an intriguing idea. Before we would ever do something like that, however, we'd want to know if there are indeed people who would be interested in taking advantage of such an offer. As far as cost is concerned, be assured that we'd make every effort to do the job as inexpensively as possible while still maintaining the quality. And we have no intention of turning a profit. What it costs, we will charge. But that could still be as much as \$18 - \$22 each. If, in spite of that, you do have an interest, please drop a note to the Business Manager, c/o the Business Office.

—D.D.

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## Meditation

Rev. James Slopsema

# Walking With God

*Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God.*

*-Genesis 6:9*

What a sharp contrast!

God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth. Every imagination of his heart was evil continually. So wicked had mankind become that it repented God that He had made man on the earth. The Lord even declared that He would destroy mankind from off the face of the earth.

And then there is Noah.

Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God.

We too live in a time of great wickedness. The world is quickly filling the cup of iniquity and making itself ripe for judgment. This time the judgment of God will not be a flood, but the final destruction of the world through fire.

How important it is to walk with God as Noah of old.

\* \* \* \* \*

When you walk with someone, you walk in the same direction, down the same path as the other person. In like manner, one walks with God when he walks in God's ways, in the same direction that God walks.

God is the God of infinite goodness. In fact, there is no good apart from Him. He is the source of all goodness and the standard of all that is good. In that goodness God lives and walks eternally. God never acts contrary to the goodness of His divine Being. All His thoughts and works and actions are in perfect accord with His goodness. For that reason all the ways of God are righteousness and truth.

To walk with God is to walk along with God in His goodness. God has revealed the way of goodness for man in His holy law. Keep the commandments of God and you walk in His goodness. Keep the commandments of God and you are walking with God.

That this is, in fact, the reality of walking with God is evident from what God says of Noah. Noah was a just or righteous man. This means that Noah ordered his life according to the laws of God.

Noah was also perfect. This means that Noah was complete, i.e., complete in his righteousness. No, this doesn't mean that Noah was without sin. But it does mean that Noah walked in the righteousness of God's law in every aspect of his life: in his marriage, in his home with his children, in his business, in every aspect of life. Noah was the kind of man that was above reproach by his fellow man.

And Noah was this in his generation, i.e., in the generation of men among whom he lived. In

Noah's days the wickedness of man was great in the earth. Mankind had corrupted the earth before God and filled it with violence. Mankind had given himself over to eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, all apart from God and His holy commandments. Amongst all this Noah lived in faithful obedience to the will and law of God.

Having described the life of Noah in this way, the Word of God sums up Noah's life in one phrase: Noah walked with God.

Do you walk with God?

Certain it is that the generation of men among whom we live is not walking with God. They are very much like the generation in which Noah found himself. They walk not with God but arm in arm with the Devil.

Let us walk with God, as did Noah. Let it be said of us that we are righteous men and women, perfect in our generation!

\* \* \* \* \*

When two walk together down the same path they normally communicate with each other. True, you can walk with someone and the both of you say nary a word. But most often those who walk with each other are friends. And friends communicate. They share with each other their joys and sorrows, their likes and dislikes, their interests, the things that happen in their lives. They do this especially when they walk together.

In like manner those who walk with God also enjoy a close com-

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



munion with God. In fact, our ability to walk with God in His goodness depends on keeping ourselves in close communion with Him.

Understand full well that we are not able to walk with God in His goodness in our own strength. Of ourselves we are wicked and depraved, dead in trespasses and sins, incapable of doing any good, inclined to every wicked way. Consequently, the only possibility that remains for us is to reach out to the Devil so as to walk arm in arm with him down the path of sin.

If we will walk with God in the way of goodness, God must transform us by His grace. He must make us good as He is good, righteous as He is righteous, holy as He is holy.

This God does by establishing with us the closest possible communion and fellowship in Jesus Christ.

In this communion God bestows upon us the blessings of salvation He has obtained for us in Jesus Christ. Through the suffering and death of Jesus Christ on the cross, God has obtained for us the forgiveness of all our sins. He has also obtained for us the power of a new life. These blessings God freely bestows upon us, the result of which is that day by day we walk with God in holiness and righteousness.

However, communication and communion are always two-sided. It takes two to communicate. Consequently, we also have an active part in the communion that exists between God and us. Our part in this communion is faith.

God bestows upon us the blessings of the cross by faith alone. This is because faith is our spiritual connection to Jesus Christ. By faith we become one with Jesus Christ and thus receive from Christ all the bless-

ings of His death and resurrection.

This faith, which is something God works in the hearts and lives of all His people, is a daily turning to God for help and salvation.

By faith we are led to see many things from the Word of God. We are led to see our sins and weaknesses so that we grieve over them in godly sorrow. We are led to see our total inability to overcome sin in our lives: to turn from our sins or to be reconciled to God. But we are also led by faith to understand that there is salvation from sin in the perfect work of Jesus Christ.

Consequently, those who live by faith turn to God, seeking the salvation He has provided in Christ. In prayer they daily confess their sins to God, seeking forgiveness in the blood of Jesus Christ. In the name of Jesus Christ they also seek God's help to overcome sin in their lives that they may lead a new life of loving service to Him.

It's only in that way — the way of faith — that God's people receive and enjoy the blessings of salvation. Through faith they obtain the forgiveness of sins and are reconciled to God. Through faith they also receive the power of a new life to walk with God in the goodness of His precepts.

Do you so walk with God?

Is yours a life of intimate communion with God, leading you to walk with God in His perfections and goodness?

\* \* \* \* \*

Noah walked with God and received a great reward. God destroyed the world with the flood for its great wickedness. But Noah was spared with his family in the ark and was brought by God to a new creation.

This serves as a picture of greater things that were to come. Just as God destroyed the world

of Noah's day with the flood, He will destroy the world of our day with fire. This shall take place when Christ one day comes again.

And in the day of Christ the ungodly will be destroyed forever, even as they were in the flood. But those who walk with God, as did Noah, shall be saved. They will be brought to a new creation, a creation much superior to that which Noah enjoyed after the flood. And in this new creation they will walk with God eternally, in perfect joy and peace. For in this new creation there will be none who oppose God or persecute His people. There will be no sin. Neither will the curse of God be found, which brings so much misery to our lives here below. There will only be the perfect bliss of God's friendship and companionship, as we walk with Him eternally.

With our eye singled to this glorious future, let us walk daily with our God in the perfection of His law, living in close communion with Him through prayer and His Word. □

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## Spiritual Breakdown

If you are impatient, sit down quietly, and have a talk with Job.

If you are just a little head-strong, go to see Moses.

If you are getting weak-kneed, take a look at Elijah.

If there is no song in your heart, listen to David.

If you are a policy man, read Daniel.

If you are getting sordid, spend a while with Isaiah.

If you feel chilly, get the beloved disciple to put his arms around you.

If your faith is below par, read Paul.

If you are getting lazy, watch James.

If you are losing sight of the future, climb up to Revelation and get a glimpse of the promised land.

—S.B., 1929



## Editorial

# Sem Profs Attend John Calvin Conference

The Theological School Committee of the Protestant Reformed Seminary makes provision for the professors to attend conferences that will be helpful for their work. With the approval of the TSC, Professors Hanko and Engelsma availed themselves of the provision to attend a "colloquium on Calvin studies" on January 19 and 20 of this year at Davidson College in Davidson, North Carolina.

A colloquium is an academic meeting at which specialists deliver addresses on a topic and then answer questions relating to the speeches. The Davidson College Colloquium is a spin-off from the Calvin Studies Society that meets every other year, usually at Calvin Seminary in Grand Rapids. The Davidson Colloquium meets in the alternate years. The purpose of the Davidson Colloquium is the same as that of the Calvin Studies Society:

*The primary purpose of the Society shall be to engage in and promote the study of the life, times, and thought of John Calvin. While centering on John Calvin, the interest shall include persons and subjects related to the Reformed aspect of the Protestant Reformation, centering on the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Besides theological subjects, historical, sociological, and other concerns shall be reflected. In pursuit of this purpose, the Society shall encourage research, sponsor conferences, and insofar as possible shall assist in and arrange for publications.*

Some ninety theologians, professors, and pastors heard nine Calvin scholars present papers and then respond to questions and reaction from the audience. Most of the speeches dealt with various aspects of the theology of John Calvin: "The Body in Calvin's Theology"; "The Doctrine of the Holy Trinity: Gregory of Nazianzen and Calvin"; "Calvin's Doctrine of Eternal Life"; "The Word of the Holy Spirit in Calvin's Theology"; and "Calvin's Significance for Evangelism Today," among others. One lecture was devoted to the theology of Heinrich Bullinger, Swiss Reformed pastor and theologian in Zurich and contemporary of Calvin. Dr. Wilhelm Neuser from the University of Munster in Germany, who coordinates international Calvin scholarship, gave a review of Calvin studies today.

Overall the papers were of real worth, reflecting solid, thorough scholarship in important aspects of the theology of the man to whom the Reformed faith owes so much. In the past the papers were published in book form. Doing this again would make available the one scheduled lecture that was not given — a lecture intriguingly titled, "A Survey of the Development of Calvin's Theology in the French Reformed Community, 1536-1990." It would also enable the registrants at the colloquium, and others, to read the lectures in their entirety. Many of the speakers struggled unsuccessfully to compress their addresses into the short span of a mere hour.

Running the risk of ignoring other speeches equally worthy, I may note several papers of special interest or value. Professor Thomas F. Torrance from



One of the sessions at the Calvin Colloquium.



the University of Edinburgh, Scotland gave a brilliant lecture on Calvin's doctrine of the Trinity in which he contended that there is basic agreement between Calvin, theologian of the Western church, and Gregory Nazianzen, the Eastern theologian.

The speech on Bullinger's theology shared the fruit of fresh research that is being done in the writings of Bullinger, some of which has not yet been translated into English. Bullinger is particularly important for Reformed theology because of his insight into the truth of the covenant in Scripture. Bullinger saw the covenant as the central, unifying doctrine of the Scripture.

I. John Hesselink argued persuasively that Calvin's teaching of the Spirit's guidance of the believer includes more than the believer's obedience to the law. There is also a "secret guidance" in which the Spirit gives the believing man or woman special insight and special empowering for the Christian walk, although this never contradicts the Word or takes place by new revelations.

Merwyn Johnson insisted that predestination (Calvin's doctrine of predestination?) must be the basis for all evangelism, since evangelism depends upon the sovereign grace of God. He stated that much of modern evangelism is faulty because it rests on the Pelagian notion of the natural ability of man and proceeds accordingly in its tactics. My notes have him saying, "Modern evangelism does not hold the priority of grace in evangelism. Rather, man himself has priority. Grace is only a possibility." Having ridden from the airport to the conference the day before on the Billy Graham Parkway, and having become accustomed to ardent defense by Reformed people of free will evangelism, we were struck by

this rare call to the Reformed churches to engage in missions on a basis that is true to their own theology: the predestination of God. The PR members of the audience would have liked to have asked the speaker whether he thought that evangelism then needs and demands the universal, conditional grace and the universal will of God to salvation of the "well-meant offer," as is the prevailing notion among professing Calvinists today. But time had run out on Saturday afternoon.

Such a conference affords the delightful opportunity to meet theologians and authors privately. In private conversation there was discussion not only of Calvin's theology but also of recent books, developments in the churches, and the widest range of matters theological. A stray remark about Joachim of Fiore (12th century monk, who developed an influential millennial teaching) to an as yet unknown dining companion occasioned a learned, useful, impromptu lecture on the millenarian monk. The tablemate turned out to be a medieval historian whose speciality for the past twenty years has been Joachim.

The interest in Calvin's theology and the work being done, worldwide, in translating, analyzing, and publishing this theology are astounding. Calvin's theology is still commanding at the end of the 20th century. This scholarly work is of great benefit to us who regard Calvin's theology as faithful explanation of the Word of God. Especially valuable is the translating into English and publishing of the writings of Calvin and of the other Reformers that have been inaccessible up until now in far-off places and in strange tongues.

The Calvin Studies Society is presently engaged in this translating and editing.

No denomination of churches has livelier interest in the theology of John Calvin than do the PRC. For in doctrine, in church government, and in worship, the theology of Calvin, as the expression of the Word of God, is the confession and practice of the PRC. There is a danger that Calvin scholarship be merely a professional activity. Men and women study Calvin as other scholars study ancient Chinese civilizations. It is not work done by the church that loves and adheres to the theology of Calvin. It is not work done on behalf of the church, so that she may come to a deeper knowledge of the truth of the Bible under the guidance of Calvin and the other Reformers. It is not even a work done by theologians who themselves share Calvin's beliefs and exert themselves to instruct the church in these beliefs.

I confess to a sense of puzzlement and disquiet when I hear of the widespread interest in Calvin's theology and when I see the devoted scholarship in this theology. Why are not the Reformed and Presbyterian churches characterized by interest in and fidelity to Calvin's theology? Why are these churches deliberately abandoning Calvin's theology, even to the point of shedding themselves of the Calvinistic creeds? Why is this true also of the churches to which some of the outstanding Calvin scholars belong? If one thing was true of Calvin, it was that he did not regard theology as mere private, academic pursuit and personal, professional business, much less as a game for Ph.D's in religion. Theology is church-work. Sound theology is necessary for the very being of the worshiping, confessing, and



obeying congregation of Christ. Where the church has apostatized, she must be reformed by theology — the theology of Calvin.

Perhaps this is what John H. Leith has in mind when he proposes that the next colloquium, in 1992, "focus on Calvin Studies as they relate to the life of the congregation. I believe the colloquium would serve the church well by concentrating on Calvin's understanding of piety, catechetical instruction and worship. Controversy on each of these themes exists in the church, and church practices increasingly deviate from Calvin's teaching."

If the Calvin Studies Society and the Davidson Colloquium on Calvin Studies are open to suggestions, I have two. First, would someone translate into English, and publish, Calvin's writings against the "Nicodemites," i.e., those who professed the Reformation gospel but for various practical reasons remained within the Roman Catholic Church? So

far as I am aware, the only work of Calvin on the subject in English is his letter of 1537 which appears in Volume III of his *Tracts and Treatises* as "On Shunning the Unlawful Rites of the Ungodly and Preserving the Purity of the Christian Religion." But there are at least several other similar works of Calvin on this very important theme, none of which to the best of my knowledge is available in English. Calvin's view of the necessity of belonging to a church that manifests the marks of the true church is not only of historical significance but is also of great practical importance for Protestants in departing churches today.

A second suggestion is that one of these conferences assign someone to prepare a paper on the subject of Calvin's severity in condemning heretics. More than once at the recent Davidson Colloquium, speakers referred to Calvin's "harshness" in dealing with those whom he regarded as

erring from the truth. No one offered a satisfactory explanation. A paper on the subject would be profitable and provocative. But let it be a theological paper, not a psychological study of Calvin's supposed emotional hang-ups. And let it be by someone who does not begin with the bias that this severity is only an abhorrent evil in Calvin.

Members of the Calvin Studies Society and of the Davidson Colloquium may like to know that the Reformed Free Publishing Association in Grand Rapids, MI has recently published Henry Cole's translation of Calvin's two great works on predestination and providence, "A Treatise on the Eternal Predestination of God" and "A Defence of the Secret Providence of God." The title is *Calvin's Calvinism*. The book had been out of print since 1950.

As has become evident by this time, we enjoyed the conference. □ —DJE

## Letters

### Amoral Evolution in the Schools

"Evolution is the root of atheism, of communism, nazism, behaviorism, racism . . . and all manner of anti-Christian systems of belief and practice." So wrote Henry M. Morris, perhaps the world's leading creationist, in a very McCarthy-like attack upon evolution. After reading Mr. Henry DeJong's article "Abortion and Evolution" (*The Standard Bearer*, Feb. 1, 1990), I felt compelled to contrast the Social Darwinism referred to above and in

Mr. DeJong's article to that of evolution as taught in our schools.

It is inconceivable that these should be confused in that evolutionary biology and the evolution that Darwin envisioned can make no ethical judgments or raise philosophical issues. Evolution deals with genes, fossils, DNA, and change through time, not moral questions or "might makes right." It is true that there are those who advocate Social Darwinism — Marx did, as did Rockefeller; but political, ethical, and philosophical views play no

part in the evolutionary game. Morris and DeJong reject evolution and turn to branding evolutionists as Nazis, racists, or abortionists. Evolution, like chemistry and mathematics, is entirely outside the realm of the abortion issue and knows neither right nor wrong. To equate the teaching of evolution with social issues is irresponsible and misleading. Perhaps if we remember this distinction, then we need not fear or distrust the fact of evolution.

Dana Scott Slaughter  
Wyoming, MI



## Response

Whose schools?

Mr. De Jong did not "reject evolution and turn to branding evolutionists as . . . abortionists." His article analyzed the theory of evolution as a teaching that not only makes all principled objection to abortion impossible but also provides solid warrant for abortion.

Evolution is a doctrine of origins. Setting aside the Bible's doctrine of origins and, thus, the God of creation and providence, evolution makes man the measure of all things. Indeed, it "knows neither right nor wrong."

Reformed Christians neither fear nor distrust the theory (not "fact") of evolution. Holding Genesis 1-3, like all Scripture, for the inspired Word of God and honoring God as sovereign Creator, they hate the theory of evolution and repudiate it utterly.

Especially in our schools.

-Ed.

## From the South

I am writing to you . . . to tell you how much I have been blessed by the witness of the Protestant Reformed Churches through their literature, especially *The Standard Bearer* . . . We thank God for the work of the PRC. Please, don't change a thing. If there's one thing that can kill a denomination, it's "progress!"

Charles H. Greenewald  
Norcross, GA

## Request for Sovereign Grace Books

. . . I love *The Standard Bearer*! God receives ALL His glory, spare none! . . . How someone can say he is "Christian" and reject the sovereignty of God perplexes me.

The reason for my writing is twofold. Foremost in my heart is to sincerely thank you and encourage you, however feebly, for

many of us devour the truth expressed in the Reformed faith! Thank you for . . . such an edifying newsletter. Secondly, I need your assistance in locating a clear, biblically sound book written by a Sovereign Grace writer dealing in depth with the issue of "The Gifts." My hope would be that it would be somewhat of an exhaustive work, one centering on why the gifts have ceased . . .

We need Sovereign Grace books!

Dion L. Marshall  
Corcoran, CA

## Response

Recommendation of books on the cessation of extraordinary and miraculous gifts is on the way, with recommendation of other books that will be helpful to you. We are also sending you books and materials as a gift.

-Ed. □

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# Laboring While It Is Day Controversial Dutch Theologian Retires Fresh Theology News From Singapore

*All Around Us*  
Prof. Robert Decker

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## Laboring While It Is Day

About two-thirds of the world's population live in countries that restrict the church in some way, according to a recent study by Issachar Frontier Missions Strategies. The study finds Saudi

Arabia leading the list of 54 countries considered "restricted access nations." These nations prohibit the publishing of Christian literature, deny access to missionaries, and forbid people to gather in religious assembly. India and Indonesia are included on this list despite the fact that

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these countries do allow some mission activity. Even if these two nations are not counted, some 44 percent of the world's population are closed to missionaries. This percentage is expected to grow in the next decade so that by the year 2000 as much as 85 percent of the population will live in countries closed to missionaries. (*Christianity Today*, December 15, 1989)

If the above report is accurate then surely the church ought to "labor while it is day, ere the night cometh in which no man can labor."

## Controversial Dutch Theologian Retires

Dr. Harry Kuitert retired in December 1989 as professor of Ethics and Dogmatics at the Free University of Amsterdam. Kuitert found himself the center of controversy in the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (GKN) several times during his 25-year career at the Free University. During the 1960s the synod of the GKN questioned Kuitert on his position on the historicity of the Fall of Adam. During that same decade the synod questioned his position on the authority of Holy Scripture. In 1976 the synod once more questioned Kuitert's position on the authority of Scripture and questioned his position on the binding character of the Reformed Confessions. On none of these occasions was the professor disciplined, though on the third occasion (1976) he was reprimanded by the synod.

Strikingly enough, the same year the synod issued its reprimand it approved the study committee report on scriptural authority, titled "*God Met Ons*" (*God With Us*), a report which was heavily influenced by Kuitert. A colleague of Kuitert, Prof. G. Manenschijn, wrote in

*Centraal Weekblad* on the occasion of Kuitert's retirement an article in which he said that Kuitert made his mark on the church. "As a student of Berkhouwer, who in the years following World War II led the GKN out of its self-chosen isolation, Kuitert further freed Reformed theology from its shortness of breath (shortsightedness) and its useless navel-gazing that characterized it during the thirties and forties." According to the same article the human quality of the setting of God's revelation was a major principle in all of Kuitert's writings. Revelation came to us, according to Kuitert, in human language and thought. The Christian religion, as other religions, begins with a searching for God that is tested in the realm of human experience. (*Centraal Weekblad*, *REC News Exchange*, *The Banner*)

That the GKN, wherein most of us have our spiritual roots, is what it is today is due in no small part to the influence of Dr. Kuitert. That is not to his credit. But then the GKN lacked the strength to discipline this man who as his career progressed grew increasingly bold in his denials of the fundamentals of the Reformed faith.

## Fresh Theology

John Stapert tells his readers that the ongoing task of theology is "to reformulate our understanding of Scripture in light of our present experience of God." We must all be open to this process: to the "reformulation of doctrine, to the recasting of catechisms, to the creation of fresh theological categories. God is never adequately captured by our formulations." Stapert thinks that miraculous healings of the sick "constitute one kind of divine intrusion that should prompt us to think afresh" (*Church Herald*).

This position, *viz.*, that our understanding of Scripture must be reformulated in the light of our present experience of God, is no different from Kuitert's view that theology must be tested by human experience. This makes man's understanding of Scripture, an understanding based on his "experience with God," the norm for faith and practice. According to this view Scripture itself can no longer be what it claims to be, the God-breathed Word which is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness. Scripture, according to this view, cannot be the absolute rule for the faith and life of the Christian. A position such as this is just another aspect of the all-out assault on the doctrine of Holy Scripture we are witnessing in our day. May God give us grace to "stand fast and hold the traditions which we have been taught," especially the traditional, Reformed doctrine of Holy Scripture (II Thessalonians 2:15).

## News From Singapore

From The Committee For Contact With Other Churches of the PRC comes several interesting news items from our fellow saints in the two congregations of the Evangelical Reformed Churches in Singapore. On behalf of these churches the Rev. Jaikaishin Mahtani, pastor of Covenant ERCS, is spending the months of February and March in his native land of India "exploring a possible mission field" there. It would appear that the Lord is giving these newly organized Reformed churches in Singapore an open door for missions in India. What a wonderful gift of God and fruit upon the mission work done by our churches in Singapore this is! Now these churches, the fruit of the faithful and diligent work of our churches, especially through



our former missionary, the Rev. Arie den Hartog, are busy themselves in missions. Let us be fervent in prayer for Rev. Mahtani and the work in India.

On January 13 the First ERCS celebrated the 8th anniversary of its organization as a church. First Church continues to enjoy numerical growth. The congregation now has a goodly number of children. The pastor of the congregation, the Rev. Lau Chin Kwee, is back in the pulpit after

suffering another bout with ulcers. May God bless Pastor Lau and strengthen him in his ministry. First Church continues to experience a great deal of difficulty in finding a permanent place for worship. Twice the government has denied their requests for permission to renovate and use existing buildings for their worship services. It appears that they will be forced to buy property and build a new church. This they had hoped to avoid

because of the tremendous cost. May God in His mercy provide for their need.

Both pastors Lau and Mahtani plan to attend the conference with sister churches scheduled for June 11, 12, and 13 in Grand Rapids. Needless to say, we eagerly look forward to seeing them again and fellowshiping with these brothers and others of like precious faith with us who are coming from various parts of the world. □

## *The Day of Shadows*

*Rev. John Heys*

# Sovereign Grace's Comforting Shadow

As pointed out last time, Abraham's obedience, when God commanded him to leave his country, kinsmen, and father, and go to a land which He would show him, revealed that he had been born again. However, that obedience was only a beginning, and in fact a small beginning, of new obedience.

Abraham did obey, and he left his country, kinsmen, and father, and the land where he had been born. But he also left that country where God brought him. He left the land where God brought him and where God promised to make him the father of a great nation, to give him a great name, to make him a blessing, and to bless all the families of this earth in him (Genesis 12:1-3). What is more, he entered into a sinful life which manifested unbelief. For

he requested his wife to lie and tell all in Egypt, where they had gone, that she was Abraham's sister.

Now it is truth that she was his stepsister. Genesis 20:12 reveals that although she was the daughter of his father, she was not the daughter of his mother. She had become his wife, and therefore to tell this half truth is to tell a lie. As his wife she was actually closer to him than if she were a full sister. Man and wife become one. Brother and sister are not. By hiding the fact that she was one flesh with him, therefore, was a lie. That lie actually means, from a positive point of view, that the king of Egypt could legally marry her. That is what Abraham and Sarah actually said by that lie. They also said that Abraham could legally marry another woman and would, because of God's promise to make a great nation of him, have to go back to Ur of

the Chaldees or Haran to find another God-fearing wife to beget his children.

But let us not overlook the fact that Abraham and Sarah clearly here revealed that they were not holding on to God's promise. They were walking in unbelief and not in faith. Here we do have a shadow of what his grandson, Jacob, did years later, when he lied and deceived his father into believing that he was Esau, so that he might get the birthright blessing. Abraham, a believing child of God, did cast a shadow of sins that appear so widely in the lives of God's people. Let it be repeated, for Scripture presents these things to show us the reality of it: The child of God in this life has only a small beginning of that new obedience. He may at times reveal tremendous faith, because God gives him the strength to do so in His sovereign grace. But he will often slip and slide and fall

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into sin because of his sinful flesh.

As pointed out last time, sin develops in the church as well as in the world. The believers stumble and fall. And sometimes that can be a tremendous fall. Peter made a beautiful confession of faith when he said "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16). But a few days later he declared, when at Jesus' trial a man said that he was a disciple of Christ, "Man, I am not" (Luke 22:58). A high point of faith can be seen in a child of God, but a low point in his spiritual life is not unusual. Did not Paul, that dedicated, faithful apostle of Christ write in Romans 7:24, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

Turn to Revelation chapters two and three. There sins are mentioned that existed in the churches listed in that chapter. Note especially the description of the church at Laodicea. We read even that God is ready to spit her out of His mouth. At the door of the church — not outside the heart of the members — stands Jesus telling them that they must open the door of their church in the sense that they again have Him preached from their pulpit. He calls those who were born again, His elect remnant in the congregation. They can hear Him. He is not calling spiritually dead sinners to let Him come into their hearts. The spiritually dead cannot hear Him knock any more than a physically dead man can hear you when you come to the funeral home. Besides, there is absolutely nothing in that whole letter to this church that even suggests that Jesus is knocking on the doors of the hearts of its members. The letter does plainly reveal that the truth is no longer being preached in that church. The bulk of the congregation is neither cold nor hot.

They have no interest in the truth concerning Christ. Him and the work He has wrought for His people does not excite and thrill them. And the lie of Satan, his devilish work which is defended, and their sinful walks of life, do not make them cold and do not make them want to run away from these evils. They are neutral both as far as the lie is concerned — false doctrines that exalt fallen man — and as far as transgressions of God's holy law are concerned. This church has fallen far. He, Christ, is ready to spew it out of His mouth. But because God loves His elect believers in that church, He commands them to bring Christ (that is, the truth concerning Him) back into the church. Churches can fall very far into sin. Adam's sin is a shadow of all these corruptions that are in the church world as well as in the rest of the human race.

To return to Abraham, let us listen to the Heidelberg Catechism when it, in Lord's Day XXIV, states that "our best works in this life are all imperfect and defiled with sin." If you do not agree with that statement, look up Isaiah 64:6 where we read, "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away." A believing child of God says that. Yea, God says that through him. Surely then we do not deserve salvation because we believe. Even if we do perform good works, as Abraham did when he obeyed God and went to the promised land, just remember that one sin calls for everlasting punishment. Go back to what God said through Isaiah. We do fade as a leaf. Our iniquities, like the wind, blow us away from the proper walk of life so very, very often.

Now it is true that God's

"grace abideth ever and faileth never." He afflicted Pharaoh so that he did not take Sarah as his wife. He protected Abraham and Sarah even though they had sinned grievously. In His grace He sent Abraham back to that promised land, and did not allow a finger to touch and hurt him. This was all because of His grace in Christ, not because of past works of faith which Abraham and Sarah performed.

Go back again to Genesis 12:7. There we read that God very clearly made plain to Abraham that Canaan was the land promised to him and his seed. There we read, "Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the Lord, Who appeared unto him." This makes it plain that Abraham knew that he was leaving the land God promised him. For we also read in verse 10 that he "went down into Egypt to sojourn there." This means that he intended to come back, and he still believed that God promised him the land of Canaan. To sojourn is not to settle. To sojourn is to be a temporary resident. Abraham still had faith. In His grace God preserves that faith everlastingly in His elect. Abraham sinned grievously, but did not lose his faith, because God kept it there in his soul!

As far as Sarah is concerned, she also sinned grievously. Even when taken into the harem to be with those women whom the king could defile and take to himself as his wife if he wanted to, Sarah did not straighten things out and say, "I am Abraham's wife." Did it thrill her to think that she could become a queen in Egypt?

However, the point to consider here is that Abraham was guilty also of her sins, as well as his own. He asked her to lie. That makes him guilty of the lie. We had better consider also the sins



which we have led others into, and realize that this is a double sin for us. We sinned by tempting, and we sinned when that other person did what we led him to do sinfully. And, once more, so that we do not forget and ignore this fact, only ONE sin of Adam brought the whole measure of punishment upon the human race. He died because of one sin, because of a sin that we might even try to minimize. A sin that takes only a split second to perform, a fleeting sinful thought or desire, is against the everlasting God, and calls for an everlasting punishment.

Here then is also the wonderful truth that is so often overlooked: Jesus Christ our Savior did not simply suffer all the punishment that we deserve because of our millions upon millions of sins, but He also DID all the works of God's law that we failed to do. Does not Scripture speak of our debts? And do we not read in I Corinthians 6:20 and 7:23 that we are bought with a price? We have a debt. We owe God works of love which we did not perform. And we are taught

by Jesus to pray, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors."

Our Savior did not save us merely by suffering our punishment. That had to be taken out of the way. But all the work of love which we did not do is still required, and He performed that work. In Matthew 5:17 He tells us that we must not think that He came to destroy the law or the prophets. And He states it emphatically, "I am not come to destroy (the law) but to fulfill."

We do have a huge debt. The older we get, the greater our debt becomes. We fail so often to walk in love toward God. We are commanded, and we were created, to walk that way every split second of our lives, without a moment of walking in hatred toward God. And remember that if we are not walking in love, we are walking in hatred. Fail to pay your debt to the government, as far as your taxes are concerned, or to a store, and your debt will get greater. The interest you must pay increases the debt. It will not fade away in time. Before the eternal God, our failure to serve calls for ever-

lasting punishment. Our Savior then must and did do the work we failed to do.

What a marvelous work of Christ, then, and what a blessed manifestation of God's grace! He, our gracious God, kept Pharaoh from killing Abraham so that he could have his wife. He did not punish Abraham, although he deserved it. Rather He sent Abraham back to the promised land. He kept fulfilling His promise even though Abraham turned against Him.

God did not speak to Abraham with His mouth, the way He did when he was in that promised land. But He did speak by His works which He performed. And note also that although Abraham left Canaan because of a grievous famine, God brought him back and kept him alive there in that land of promise. God keeps every letter in every word of His promise to His church. Here we have a shadow of the great blessedness that is coming to us. One day we are going to see fully and perfectly that His "grace abideth ever and mercy faileth never." □

## The Strength of Youth

Rev. Barrett Gritters

## The End Times (3):

# The Antichrist

A major sign of the end times is the rise and development of Antichrist. In the last days, shortly before the return of our Lord, Antichrist will come to rule the world, conquer the nations, and

overcome the saints, as a power that cannot be resisted. He will be the antithesis to Christ.

The name Scripture gives him is "Antichrist," in the singular. He is "the man of sin" and the "son of perdition," who "opposes," "exalts himself," "sitteth in the temple of God," shows "himself that he is God," and is "con-

sumed." If Antichrist is to come in the place of Christ and against Christ (as the name indicates), it would seem that he would present Himself as the Christ. My assumption here is that the Antichrist will be one man.

This is not to say that there are not even now *many* antichrists, as the New Testament

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makes plain (I John 2:18), that is, many persons who come to oppose Christ and His work. Nor should this distract our attention from the spirit of Antichrist that is already in the world, working furiously to destroy the church of Christ. When the Scripture refers to Antichrist, though, we are pointed to a man who will come as a spiritual and political head of the world.

A radical departure from the faith (see the last article, "The Divorcing of the Truth") will usher in the man of sin, the Antichrist. This is a natural development in the history of the world and the church. The falling away prepares for the Antichrist, who could not be successful in his mission unless most church members were already duped. The Antichrist is the climax of the departure from the faith of the gospel.

There are two errors that must be avoided in connection with the coming of Antichrist. First, we must not be unrealistically optimistic about the future. We know that Christ will conquer in the end — has conquered, really — as we sing, "Christ shall have dominion over land and sea." We know that the gates of hell will not prevail against the church. But this does not mean that there will not be horrible times for the church, that the battle will mean blood and fire and painful wounds. The institute will be destroyed, many saints killed, the ability to buy and sell removed for those who will not bow to the beast and his image. The future is not rosy. There is a battle to be fought.

But we ought not to be pessimistic and frightened about these times either. The danger is more real for us that we be paralyzed with fear from this message of "gloom and doom." "What will happen to our family, friends, church, homes, schools? Where will we go when the Anti-

christ comes? Will we be able to stand against his forces when he demands submission and unconditional obedience?" More importantly, because of his deception, "will we be able to detect him for who he really is?" The Lord gives us great and precious promises. No one shall be able to pluck you out of his hand. We are more than conquerors through Christ, because Christ is victor over the Antichrist. He shall come to consume him with the breath of his mouth.

The key texts to study in connection with the Antichrist are II Thessalonians 2, Revelation 13 & 17, and Daniel 7 & 8, (as well as I John 2:18 and similar passages). Read these Scriptures carefully.

The symbolism of Revelation 13 points out that there are two sides to Antichrist's *kingdom*: a political side and an ecclesiastical side, a reign over the church as well as a reign over the world.

*The political side* of Antichrist's reign is represented by the first beast of Revelation 13. Coming out of the sea, which represents the nations of the earth (Daniel 7:2, 3 and Revelation 17:15), it wears the crowns of *royalty* (see also Daniel 7:17, 23). This kingdom will be a combination of the world powers of the past as well as of the present. Whereas in Daniel the prophet spoke of different beasts representing different nations, John shows in Revelation one monstrous creature, one conglomerate of nations. The beast has ten horns, representing a complete measure of power to rule (see Revelation 13:7). The wound that God inflicted on Babel's attempt for political world unity will be healed (Rev. 13:3). Instead of conflict, cold war or hot war, there will be peace. "And they worshiped the beast, saying, who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?"

Young people, do you read the

newspapers and news magazines? Do you analyze history and current events? Don't be blind to the developments in the world today. The Berlin wall is coming down and the Germanies may unite. Czechoslovakia is abandoning (apparently) its Communist rule. Other Communist countries are leaning toward Capitalism. What this may mean for the future of the world is not known. But keep your ears to the ground and your eyes peeled. A great world communication system; one world language and monetary system; one great government. Are they possible?

There is also an *ecclesiastical side* to the Antichrist. This is represented by the second beast of Revelation 13.

Four things stand out regarding the symbolism of this beast. This second beast comes out of the earth. It looks like a lamb. It speaks like a dragon. It stands in the service of the first beast. This beast represents, not another kingdom, but the spiritual side of the first kingdom. The beast may seem fierce, but he looks like a lamb, evidently the looks of Christ. The Antichrist, sitting in the temple of God (II Thess. 2:4), is *worshiped* by earthlings, again, a sign of a religious empire. The beast will persuade people to build an image, to which he will give life, which they will worship.

The Antichrist arises out of the church, combining the powers of the world and the church to fuse together one politically and religiously unified empire (see Revelation 17:1, 2). Again, this is what the church is moving towards today. Think once of all the work the "church" is doing to try to improve the world apart from gospel preaching. The social gospel that Jesus is a savior from problems, mental, political, economic, and social, is the rage. Think of the political involve-



ment of many churches. Think of the Vatican's (Rome's) embassies in many of the countries of the world and the astounding acceptance of the pope by the world's leaders as a political power!

The Lord gives a general picture of what the world will be at the end of time. Down there at the end of time there is a form into which the church and the world must fit. Here we are in the church today, able to see that the "church" is molding itself to fit into that shape. "He that has an ear to hear, let him hear."

One kingdom, with one head, with one unifying power: they will all worship the image of the beast.

Oh, it will be a *glorious, appealing, rich, kingdom* from the viewpoint of the world. This, too, must be made clear. The devil wants nothing more than the minds of young people to envision an evil empire with hooded guards wearing spiked helmets, evil-looking leaders with black and red flags, riding black horses and exercising a tyrannical and oppressive rule. That's deception. His kingdom will be a glorious kingdom, the Antichrist's: politically sound, economically prosperous, socially acceptable, religiously appealing. Wars will be eliminated for a time; famine eradicated or overruled; poverty clean gone. And true religion will be outlawed.

Antichrist!

*The power of the beast* is the power of the devil himself, of the great dragon (Rev. 12:2, 4). Don't miss this. Thus, the work of the beast is a work against Christ. He is a false prophet supreme, speaking on behalf of the devil, teaching men, persuading men, to gain them to the devil's side. To change II Corinthians 10:5, his goal will be to cast down every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of the beast, and bring into captivity

every thought to the obedience of the Antichrist. Revelation 13:5 says, "And there was given him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies . . . and he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven."

If Christ came to oppose sin, Antichrist will promote it. If Christ came to represent the righteousness of God, the Antichrist will represent unrighteousness. If Christ came to bring all glory to the Father, the Antichrist will seek it for himself, robbing God. If Christ came to save sinners, the purpose of Antichrist will be to damn them to hell, to bring as many to his domain as possible for him and his minions.

The culmination of the beast's work will be that the world will be seduced to worship him instead of God, saying to him, "Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." This always has been and always will be his goal.

His deception will be powerful, so powerful that if they were not God's chosen ones, the elect would be deceived. Men and women will not so easily be bamboozled into worshiping something other than God. So, as miracles were given to God's prophets as credentials, as it were, of their ministry (Hebrews 2:2-4), the Antichrist will use great wonders and signs to "confirm" his divine authority. "I am God."

This is sometimes questioned. Some believe that Antichrist will have only the ability to display marvelous, natural, earthly powers. I believe that Antichrist may well have supernatural powers. Revelation 13:13, 14 says, "He doeth great wonders... he deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast." Mat-

thew 24:24 says, "For there shall arise false Christs . . . and shall shew great signs and wonders; inasmuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect," the words used there being the same as describe the miracles of our Lord. II Thessalonians 2:9 points out: "Even him whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders . . ." The works of Antichrist will be the works of Satan, who has power, given only by God, of course, but beyond the natural ability of man.

The beast will be able to speak! He will make fire come down from heaven. Perhaps he will turn you, then, to the history of Elijah and ask you to begin dancing to see if your God will send fire from heaven. Will you be deceived?

He is coming.

Yes, his spirit and power has always been in the world, ever increasing with the years. The mystery of iniquity is already working. "Everyone that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God; and this is the spirit of Antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come, and even now already is it in the world" (I John 4:3). Let no antichrist beguile you, young people, before the Antichrist comes.

He is not yet here in full manifestation. Though never yet has there been a power like this power, it is coming. I come quickly, says the Lord.

You cannot keep him from coming. You must fight his power, his spirit, his work — not with the sword of the flesh, but of the Spirit. But you will not stop his final manifestation.

Here is the patience and the faith of the saints, of young people in God's church. Don't deny Christ; wait for the coming when Christ shall finally show his



dominion over all things, consuming the Antichrist with the spirit of His mouth and destroying him with the brightness of His coming; purify yourself even as Christ is pure.

God give you grace to be faithful, watching, waiting.

Questions for discussion:

1. Are there parallels in OT history to what will happen in the future regarding the Antichrist? What can we learn from them?
2. Is the pope Antichrist?
3. What would be more deceptive: an Antichrist as one

person, or a group of persons?

4. What should we beware of concerning the Antichristian kingdom?
5. Should we wish for the Antichrist to come, since this means Christ, too, will come soon? ☐

## Contribution

Mrs. Karen Karsten

# The Greatest of These Is Love

*Mrs. Karsten, an able writer who has written before for publication, is a member of our Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church. We encouraged her to submit to the S.B. an article on a subject which we knew to be of concern to her: the manifestation of the love of Christ in the lives of His people. She did that for us, and we're glad to share it here with our readers.*

The reality of shattered perfection gripped fiercely onto the souls of Adam and Eve. The world, which had harmonized so perfectly with their lives, had become a place of hostility, strife, and death. Their touch would no longer produce eager and lush growth in the plant world, and a barrier of fear would shut them out of the animal kingdom. Pain clutched at their hearts as they listened to the creation groan under the lash of sin. But the searing pain of lost fellowship with their Father was the most difficult to bear. A great gulf of sin separated them from the perfect love and communion which had so richly nourished and blessed their lives. To be sure, God had promised relief. The demonic power of sin would

be crushed and vanquished by the promised Savior. Adam and Eve clung tenaciously to this precious promise, for it was to be the avenue of love and fellowship with their Father. Yet, many questions crowded their minds. Would there be some visible sign of this promised Savior? Who was this new enemy called death? And how were they to work and function in this fallen world? It was then that God reached down and stilled the breath and life of simple animals. Their life was snatched away and their blood flowed bright and crimson over the ground as God used their skins to cover the bodies of his needy children. What a profound spiritual lesson Adam and Eve learned in those first few hours of life in a fallen world! Their sin, with its terrible consequences, could be covered only by the sacrificial blood of Christ. The broken and bleeding lamb would be the perpetual sign until the Savior arrived. Not only was bloodshed to signify death, it was also to be the key to life and love.

This first death and bloodshed began a flow of blood which would run down through the centuries. Soon Abel's life was snatched away and his blood cried out from the ground. Because his death pointed to Jesus Christ, Adam and Eve found comfort in God's love and promise. And Noah, after escaping a cataclysmic destruction of the world, offered animals in sacrifice to be reminded by their blood that God loved him. Years later in Egypt, thousands of expectant, tremulous Israelites killed a sacrificial lamb and poured the blood over their doorposts. Death hovered and passed because of the blood and God's protecting love.

Finally, at the very pinnacle of history, the sign became a reality. The very life-blood of God Himself flowed on Golgotha to cover the sins of a multitude of believers. Through Christ's blood and His love, the atonement for sin was complete and the sacrificial bloodshed of animals was forever ended. Yet, the blood of Christ continues to course through the veins of His church. This life-blood is His



love, the same love that Adam and Eve saw only through the sacrificial animals.

The fact that God's love flows through the body of the church is no small wonder. It brings warmth, nourishment, protection, cleansing, and healing to all of her members just as blood functions within the human body. Without this flow of liquid tissue the body soon perishes. So also, God's love gives vitality and energy to the church so that she can carry out her calling in the world. It is not surprising that God's love functions as the church's life-blood, for Scripture tells us that the very essence or heartbeat of God is love (I John 4:8). The most profound demonstration of that love is found in redemption and atonement. "In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love . . . that he loved us and sent his Son to be a propitiation for our sins" (I John 4:9, 10).

This love flows to each member on a very individual basis. Just as the interaction of blood with the various body organs is different, so also God's love interacts with each saint in a unique and individual way. This interaction is an internal, private, and exclusive exchange between the individual and his God. It is a personal relationship which thrives on prayer and personal study of God's love letter, the Bible. It develops roots by conscious surrender of grief and pain. It grows rich and strong through adoration and confession. The ability of the individual to work and function within the church depends largely on the growth and development of this relationship. A lively personal relationship of love with Christ produces life and growth in the church. An indifferent and

apathetic attitude towards this relationship makes the church lethargic and sickly.

It is apparent, therefore, that even though God's love begins with the individual in a private, invisible relationship, yet, the reality of this becomes evident in how the members of God's church interact with one another. Internal love of God is verified by external works of love. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:35). "If any man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God who he hath not seen?" (I John 4:20).

This love functions on many different levels, from marital and familial love to love among Christians in a variety of churches and places. But all of these relationships of love share basic behavioral characteristics. The Scriptures are replete with descriptions of and instructions for Christ-like love. Matthew 25:31-46 teaches that the greatest evidence of Christian love is found in an eagerness to feed, clothe, and minister unto the least esteemed member of the body. Love is demonstrated by committed, sacrificial service. Scripture gives us a sterling example of this in the life of Abraham as he dealt with his nephew Lot. Even though he was superior to Lot in spiritual and physical wealth, yet, he never hesitated to set aside his personal comforts to aid his ever straying "brother." Not only did he readily employ his resources in a dangerous rescue of Lot from the kings of the East, but he also dared to intercede before God for Lot's life when Jehovah had determined to destroy Sodom. Abraham acted out of committed, sacrificial love even when there was little reward for his work.

Abraham's life demonstrates that love is not only committed, but it is also fearless. He did not cower when God called him out of Ur to a strange land, or when he hurried to Lot's rescue, or was asked to offer up his only son. His faith was in God's love, and so he acted without fear. He was confident in his life because he was confident in the cleansing power of the sacrificial blood. The same is true within the church today. When the members of the body of Christ fully experience the power of Christ's love and forgiveness, they will also experience confidence in their earthly walk and relationships. They will have the freedom to be honest in regards to their needs and shortcomings. Unthreatened by fear, confrontation and confession can occur in a loving spirit among members. The life of the church is then characterized by health and vitality. But when individuals are insecure and anxious in their relationship with God, they will also experience the same anxiety and insecurity in their interpersonal relationships. And fear within the church is like bacteria in the bloodstream. It steals life and energy out of the body and makes work difficult or impossible. And when faith in God's love is weak the church is often afflicted by other serious illnesses. Members become suspicious and distrustful of one another. Looking for security in group consensus, they may form exclusive cliques which are harsh and judgmental of other members. Differing opinions may be viewed as a threat rather than an asset to the church. Every issue and discussion degenerates into a battle between "sides." Instead of ministry, suspicion and anger begin to control the life of the church. But perhaps the most pernicious disease to affect fearful church members is a reliance



on the outward forms and practices of religion for security before God. Members may find a superficial relief from spiritual anxiety in their church attendance, in their tithing, their support of Christian institutions, or in a host of other rules and regulations for home and church life. But this mere formal and legal practice of religion distracts members from their need for a growing relationship of love with Christ. Jesus fully understood the subtle and deadly effect of formalism and legalism in the church. Much of his ministry was spent in revealing and condemning this evil. "But woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs and pass over judgment and the love of God . . ." (Luke 11:42).

Overcoming fear and its devastating effects within the church requires a renewed understanding of where the members of the church stand before God. It requires a clear focus on God's love for His beloved church, and on the blood price paid for her redemption. "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us . . ." (1 John 3:16). Only then can church members learn the meaning of love without fear. 1 John 4 clearly teaches that love casts out fear. Freed from the condemning power of sin, we are given a spirit of "power and of love and of a sound mind" (1 Timothy 1:7). Depending on Christ for this spirit, the church once torn by fear and insecurity can be renewed. A proper understanding and practice of God's love will rush like blood within the body to heal the slightest of injuries.

Finally, 1 Corinthians 13 beautifully summarizes how love behaves. It is patient and is not easily irritated; it restrains when the instinct is to take revenge or retaliate. It is kind; its actions are characterized by gentleness, affection, and courtesy. It does not envy; it rejoices in the accomplishments and gifts of others and brings contentment in every situation. It does not boast and is not proud but enables the individual to realistically and honestly assess himself and his life. It is not rowdy, rude, or indecent but respects the person, property, and opinions of others. It does not seek itself; it gives generously of its time, resources, and energies. It is not easily provoked but is calm, sensible, and understanding. It shuns evil; it does not gossip but "covers a multitude of sins" (1 Peter 4:8). It finds joy in the truth and rejoices whenever good is done and the truth is shared.

Love within the body of Christ bears, believes, and hopes all things. It bears up when persecution slashes at her vital organs and heresy seeks to still her beating heart. It continues to believe when radical misuse of Scriptural teachings cripples her walk, and when indifference and lethargy threaten to silence her voice. Love gives the church the ability to hope during the ravages of schism and strife and when she reels under the fiery attacks of imprisonment, want, rejection, and despair.

It is the love of God and love among the members that keeps the church vibrant and alive. Centuries of suffering and struggle have not left her broken and scarred. Her face has not grown wizened or her hands twisted and gnarled. Her voice still rings clear and her footsteps are strong and sure — because within her body streams the invigorating blood of God's love. It continues

to heal and nourish and bless. It encourages the lonely, gives hope to the despondent, renews those broken by sorrow, loss, or persecution. Flowing tirelessly it seeks out the sinning, wandering members and draws them into fellowship. It heals the diseases of fear and strife and gives power to her walk and witness.

And finally, when the ages culminate, God will gather into His arms a lonely bride, made more radiant and glowing by her endurance of time and history. Then the love of God will be fully understood and appreciated. And the saints will stand before the throne in white robes and their voices will join in the holy chorus: "Worthy is the lamb that is slain!" With delight they will at last gather around the banquet tables of heaven, and the palace of the King will resound with holy merriment as the great, celestial love feast commences. □

## My Portion

### POSSESSION

I've a wonderful possession,  
Peace with God through Christ  
my Lord,  
Mine forever, He hath said it,  
In His own unerring Word.

### POSITION

Having naught, deserving  
nothing,  
Yet, I'm standing in His grace,  
I've no right, but still I'll stand  
there,  
Till I see Him face to face.

### EXPECTATION

I've the greatest expectation  
Ever known to earthborn sons,  
For my blessed Lord is coming  
To reclaim His purchased ones.

### OCCUPATION

Now I meditate the glory —  
Occupied until He comes.  
Joying in my God and Saviour,  
Till He takes me to His home.

—S.B., 1929



## When Thou Sittest in Thine House

Rev. Kenneth Koole

# Headship in Marriage: Called to Live Like Kings

There is a children's song that goes like this: "First comes love. Then comes marriage. Then comes 'you know who' with a baby carriage."

No, not exactly, sad to say. And certainly not today. Not in that order, in some instances; but in others, not with that fruit. Marriage, in far too many instances, does not mean a readiness to have children at all. It is not considered "smart." My only question at this point is, who for us determines what is "smart" (wise)? Society? Self? Or God and His Word? The believer recognizes that this is certainly God's business. It is to be a matter of prayerful consideration.

But to get back to the children's chant. They are right, though it be in their ignorance. There is a certain order that pertains to marriage, an order that is God-ordained, an order that can be dismissed only with dire consequences. What is it that follows love?

We considered last time what was first and primary in marriage, namely, love. Love is basic. It is love that leads to marriage, it is love that comes to expression in marriage, and it is this love that is to permeate the marriage to the benefit of all concerned. Of this the Scripture reminds the believing husband

more than once. (Cf. Eph. 5:25ff; Col. 3:19, etc.) But what we go on to point out is that the calling of the husband does not stop there. There is more involved. A second element enters in, namely, headship. And here one enters the arena of conflict, both in the marriage itself, and in contemporary, strident debate. It is THE point at issue today. For the husband, does "love" mean "headship"? And if it does, what does that mean for the woman? And what does it mean for the man? Batten down the hatches. We enter rough seas here.

Central to the Reformed conception of things is "headship," God-ordained headship. It is central to our conception of marriage and the home as well. Here also there is but one head. And that head is not to be the woman! That head is to be the man. There is little love for this doctrine today. The feminists tell us it is a myth popularized by chauvinistic males (also, Calvinistic males).

Male headship can be denied in subtle ways in the church. The wife makes no claim to be the head of the home. If, on family visitation, the elders were to ask who was the head of the home, the woman would say, "Oh, my husband, of course." And he would quickly agree. But the elders know very well that, while she makes no claims to being the head, this wife is the neck, and she turns the "head" "witherso-

ever she listeth." And if her husband occasionally becomes a bit balky about being swivelled about, she can make his life most miserable and unhappy indeed. He says he is head (with her approval). In reality, he is nothing but a "figure-head." His wife will not put up with anything else. This is not recognition of headship.

Insistence upon male headship in the home is not a denial of Christ's supreme headship, but a recognition of it and submission to it. Christ's will is plain. "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord (i.e., as standing in Christ's stead!). For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church . . ." (Eph. 5:22, 23). Obviously, this is not a "concession" that Paul is making for his day and age, but it is meant for all time, as long as there is the ordinance of marriage.

You can start arguing away the husband's headship when Christ ceases to be the Head of the church. Paul ties the two together. The one is the pattern for the other. An assault on man's headship here is an assault on Christ's.

This headship is not based on some innate masculine superiority, though psychologically the male is better qualified for leadership than his female counterpart. Nonetheless, in many instances the wife may be superior to her husband in

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*Rev. Koole is pastor of Faith Protestant Reformed Church of Jenison, Michigan.*



various gifts and abilities, and, if her husband is struck with a crippling disease, even in strength. Superior abilities neither establishes nor destroys the principle of headship. Headship is an office. And Christ gives the office to the husband, not to the wife.

This means two things. First, it means that the believing wife must study the Bible so she can understand this doctrine of headship. She must do that so she knows what her Lord requires of her. And by "Lord" we mean, Christ Jesus. It is to Him that her ultimate obedience lies.

And, secondly, it means that the husband himself must study the doctrine of headship to know what is required of him in his office. Contrary to what we might think, true headship is no more natural to the male than submission is to the woman. By nature we are irresponsible, and irresponsibility has about as much in common with headship as Vanity Fair has with Paradise.

Headship, of course, is not the same as rights of tyranny, as though everything that the husband does and demands is right and good. God has not given headship to the man so that everything can go his way. It does mean that he has the "final say," but that does not mean his "final say" necessarily has God's approval. God did not grant headship so that the man could take care of #1, if that #1 is self. But God has granted headship for the sake of the "body," namely, the wife and the home.

It is the same as with elders in Christ's church. They have headship in the congregation (which is why women can not hold the office), but not so that they can take care of themselves in some hierarchical fashion. Rather it is so that they can govern and direct the affairs of the church for the well-being of that body of believers. Yes, like kings they

have final "say" in congregational matters. But their concern is to have nothing to do with self and their "creature comforts"; rather it has to do with the direction and ultimate blessedness of the church.

And here is the point; headship means a life of service. But it is service by the use of AUTHORITY. As it is in the church with the elders, so it is to be in the home with the man.

It is here that we run headlong into this deep antagonism of the feminist movement. Feminism is one of the prevailing "spirits" of the day, and has so intimidated mankind that the charge of "chauvinism" sends them scurrying for cover like so many rabbits caught in the carrot patch. It militates against every notion of male-headship, whether in church, government, or home. Marriage, it insists, is to be a 50-50 proposition. All traditional roles are to be scrapped. There is to be joint rule.

I have no problem with scrapping traditional roles. My problem lies with scrapping BIBLICAL roles. And Scripture on this matter is clear. It is not for nothing that Peter says that Sarah called Abraham "Lord."

If headship means anything, it means that marriage is not a 50-50 proposition. That is an impossibility anyway.

A marriage contract that speaks of joint rule, equality of say-so between wife and husband, is nought but a pious platitude. Three, a triumvirate, can function somewhat; two can out-vote the one. What happens when one votes against one? Who gets her way? And I say "her way" because I can assure you that in any 50-50 marriage agreement between male and female, the woman is the one who will "wear the pants." If she is "persuasive" enough already at the engagement to get the man

to agree to a 50-50 proposition, you may be sure she will dominate in the marriage as well. She will be the one who "crows," he the one who attempts "to hatch the eggs." The only other possibility would be two independent beings going basically their own ways, sharing a bed together at night, and not much else. This is marriage in name only.

The point is, one or the other will be the "head," determining the direction of the home, not both. After all is said and done, only one can have the say-so. What we are saying is that Scripture teaches that that one is to be the man.

The Women's Lib. movement must be withstood and opposed. How? Well, not simply by shouting it down. Nor by exercising tyrannical force in the home, by means of raging and threats frightening the wife and children into submission. That is folly and sin. Is that Christ-like?

Rather we oppose the feminist movement when we as God-fearing husbands exercise headship and give direction, spiritual direction to the home. This is our answer to the devilish spirit of the day.

It comes down to this, we as husbands are to live like Kings! (There, that ought to make the feminists shout!) This is our right. This is our calling. Would you believe this is also love?

What must be remembered in this regard is that there are two kinds of kings. There are the Eglons of this world, who rule from the seat of their pants, demanding that they get service! For such God's Word has nothing but left-handed "compliments." And there are the Josephs, who oversee things through personal involvement, faithful stewards in the name of their King, looking well to the ways of their realm.



Which we are called to be should be readily apparent.

First comes love. Then comes marriage. Then comes the man insisting on headship; insisting on it not by going about doing irresponsible, self-satisfying things, and then refusing to be answerable to anybody; but in-

sisting on it by exercising it, governing the affairs of the home. The authority which headship gives one must be USED. It must be used in providing leadership, leadership wedded to the consideration of love.

Loving leadership, interjected with a good dose of tenderness.

There is no better definition of headship than that. That defines Christ. Active headship is not contrary to love, but its proper expression. For the believing husband there is no love if he refuses the responsibility that goes along with the "crown," which is to say, his office. □

*Guest Article*  
Rev. Thomas Miersma

## Destroyed for Lack of What?

The problem with the various Reformed denominations today including our own, according to many, particularly if you talk occasionally with those who go by the name "Reformed" or "Presbyterian" outside of our churches, is a kind of stuffy, dead orthodoxy. We are supposed to be afflicted with a kind of moldy, old-fashioned conservatism or traditionalism, which is stifling, and which kills the life of the church and all enthusiasm or zeal. This is usually further equated with a quenching of the life of the Spirit and an inability to do the work of evangelism and missions. This opinion usually also has a corollary attached to it: that if you defend the truth and speak seriously or pointedly about error you are either lacking in love or worrying about doctrinal minutiae, fine points which are merely matters of hair-splitting or concerns about issues that are really only matters of semantics. All of this stuffy, dead orthodoxy is supposed to have very little to

do with the real meaning, purpose, or calling of the church of Christ. It is after all irrelevant to the Christian life, or "my Christian life," or so the criticism goes.

Now, a word of explanation is probably in order at this point. In the first place, the foregoing description is not a mere cartoon or caricature. One does not have to have that much contact outside our churches to hear opinions such as these. Sadly, one also hears these or similar words sometimes within our churches. Nor would one deny that dead orthodoxy, mere intellectualism, or mere traditionalism are serious errors to which the church of Christ is prone in sinful complacency. But in the second place, it must be pointed out that it is exactly the attitude which regards doctrine as a mere intellectual form, mere tradition, which gives rise to the opinions represented above. It is exactly at the point at which the doctrine of God's Word ceases to live in our hearts, to move us because it is the truth of God and our salvation and becomes empty form, that it is in danger of being set aside for something that stimu-

lates and excites the mind or emotions, or is attractive to itching ears as new and different. It is precisely the person who regards doctrine out of the spirit of dead orthodoxy, who regards it as basically irrelevant to actual Christian living, who is most wide open to doctrinal corruption. It is exactly such an individual who does not see any real need for purity, precision, and faithfulness in confession, other than traditionalism, who finds a heartfelt zeal for the truth a nuisance, a majoring in minors, and considers such an attitude to be "unloving." He does so exactly because a love of the truth is not in his heart. Such dead orthodoxy leads to a formal traditionalism which has lost the foundation and which may therefore be altered, changed, and disregarded. The net result is usually increasing doctrinal ignorance through indifference while maintaining for a time an appearance of orthodoxy. A decline in any real understanding of the truth of God's Word takes place, particularly in the generations, and the church is open to more blatant departures from the truth.

*Rev. Miersma is pastor of the Protestant Reformed Church of Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.*



The one who makes these charges is usually himself a product of dead orthodoxy.

It is exactly for this reason that this charge of dead orthodoxy is often leveled at what is in fact fervent, Biblical, and principled Reformed orthodoxy. It is a charge of rigidity leveled against one who takes seriously God's law, His Word, and the truth set forth in that Word and which we confess from the heart. For the fact of the matter is that orthodoxy has never destroyed the church. The truth of God's Word set forth in the Scriptures is the foundation of the church. It is that truth we confess in our creeds and confessions. That truth, though the church develops in its understanding of it, does not change from generation to generation or with the whims of theological fashion. It is the truth of the God Who changes not.

Not doctrine, but doctrinal ignorance destroys the church. Not a faithful, orthodox confession of that truth from the heart, but a heart that forgets God's law, either by dead orthodoxy and formalism or by apostasy. The trouble in many Reformed denominations of our day is not orthodoxy but the lack of it. The trouble lies with a man-centered approach to the truth which does not receive the truth of God out of the obedience of faith but would evaluate it out of man's perception, in his judgment of its utility. If I am not moved by the truth, the doctrine, the practice taught in God's Word or if it doesn't produce the results I think it ought to have in the church or on the mission field, then it is the doctrine or the historic, Biblical, Reformed practice which is judged to be at fault. The question whether in fact the problem lies with me doesn't arise or, if it does, it is rejected. The question whether an

unbelieving attitude, a sinful indifference, man-made notions of what ought to be, a real ignorance of Reformed doctrine and God's Word or lack of understanding, a weakness of faith or unbelief, or a failure to regard God and His Word, seldom if ever seems to be considered the cause of the trouble, though it is the real cause of the trouble.

For, you see, a love of the truth, a fervent zeal for faithfulness in doctrine according to the Word of God, for orthodoxy in doctrine and practice, is never a cause of trouble. On the contrary, we read in Hosea 4:6, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children." Not doctrine, not a careful attention to God's Word, His law, and its meaning, destroy the church, but lack of it. Not fine distinctions concerning the truth of God and His will, the fine points of doctrine and practice, but the lack of them, a spiritual indifference to God's Word, an empty shallow, superficial treatment of God's Word and its doctrine, a forgetting of His Word, that destroys the church. That is a matter of both the head, knowledge, and the heart, remembrance, for it is a matter of the assured knowledge of faith from which the confidence of faith also springs.

Where a heartfelt knowledge of the truth is rejected, God also judges. It is thus that God speaks to Israel, "Because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me." An apostate people cannot serve God or offer unto Him the sacrifice of praise. Where God's will and His Word are forgotten, God also says, "I will forget thy children." Doctrine and life are inseparable.

Where the truth of the Word of God is set aside, neglected with indifference, or ignored through unbelief, where instruction ceases because there is no love for it in the heart, there also God cuts off in judgment the generations to come. For it is by faith that we stand from generation to generation.

Nor is that difficult to understand God's work through means, means of grace. It is by the means of grace, the teaching, preaching, and instruction in sound doctrine that God works faith in our hearts, keeps and preserves us as His people and gathers His church from generation to generation. The means of grace have as their content the truth of the gospel, the Word of God, the doctrine both of salvation and godliness, and by it God works the knowledge of faith and confidence. "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge . . ." The trouble with many Reformed churches and other denominations of our day is not stuffy old doctrine but the lack of doctrine and knowledge, spiritual ignorance and an unbelieving attitude which regards doctrine as stuffy and old-fashioned. It is destroying what was once called Reformed on every side of us like a rampant spiritual disease. Neither is it a virus to which we as Protestant Reformed Churches are immune. God has given us a rich heritage of the truth of His Word. This is a gift of His grace and a blessing whose proper spiritual fruit is a gratitude which shows itself in thankfulness for His blessings and that concretely, by a fervent love and knowledge of the truth. This love will manifest itself in a delight in the preaching of God's Word, a zeal to instruct our children in that truth in catechism, and in a faithful attendance and participation in our societies. □



## DIRECTORY, PROTESTANT REFORMED CHURCHES

### NEW JERSEY:

Covenant P. R. Church  
283 Squawbrook Rd.  
Wyckoff, NJ 07481  
Services: 10:00 & 6:00  
Pastor: Rev. R. Flikkema  
Pastor's Phone: (201) 891-0902

### PENNSYLVANIA:

Norristown P.R. Church  
17 Miami Rd.  
Norristown, PA 19403  
Services: 10:00 & 1:30  
Pastor: Rev. K. Hanko  
Pastor's Phone: (215) 630-8970

### MICHIGAN:

Byron Center P.R. Church  
1945 84th St.  
Byron Center, MI 49315  
Services: 9:30 & 5:00  
Pastor: Rev. B. Gritters  
Pastor's Phone: (616) 878-3255

Faith P.R. Church  
7194 20th Ave.  
Jenison, MI 49428  
Services: 9:30 & 7:00  
Pastor: Rev. K. Koole  
Pastor's Phone: (616) 457-5848

First P.R. Church (Grand Rapids)  
2800 Michigan St. N.E.  
Grand Rapids, MI 49506  
Services: 9:30 & 6:00  
Pastor: Rev. M. Joostens  
Pastor's Phone: (616) 247-0638

First P.R. Church (Holland)  
290 E. 18th St.  
Holland, MI 49423  
Services: 9:30 & 6:30  
Pastor: Rev. W. Bruinsma  
Pastor's Phone: (616) 396-8303

Grandville P.R. Church  
(meeting in Grandville High School)  
3535 Wilson Ave.  
Grandville, Michigan  
Services: 9:30 & 6:00  
Pastor: Rev. J. Kortering  
Pastor's Phone: (616) 538-2575

Hope P.R. Church (Walker)  
1580 Ferndale S.W.  
Walker, MI 49504  
Services: 9:30 & 7:00  
Pastor: Rev. J. Slopsema  
Pastor's Phone: (616) 453-3253

Hudsonville P.R. Church  
5101 Beechtree Ave.  
Hudsonville, MI 49426  
Services: 9:30 & 7:00  
Pastor: Rev. G. VanBaren  
Pastor's Phone: (616) 669-0755

### MICHIGAN:

Kalamazoo P.R. Church  
4515 Green Acre Dr.  
Kalamazoo, Michigan  
Services: 9:30 & 6:00  
Pastor: Rev. B. Woudenberg  
Pastor's Phone: (616) 345-4556

Southeast P.R. Church  
1535 Cambridge S.E.  
Grand Rapids, MI 49506  
Services: 9:30 & 5:00  
Pastor: Rev. S. Key  
Pastor's Phone: (616) 452-7047

Southwest P.R. Church  
4875 Ivanrest Ave.  
Grandville, MI 49418  
Services: 9:30 & 6:00  
Pastor: Rev. M. Kamps  
Pastor's Phone: (616) 532-4846

### ILLINOIS:

Bethel P.R. Church  
10 AM, 900 W. Glen Trail  
6 PM, 927 W. Glen Trail  
Elk Grove Village, Illinois  
Pastor: Rev. R. VanOverloop  
Pastor's Phone: (708) 529-4676

Peace P.R. Church  
Illiana Christian High School  
2261 Indiana Ave.  
Lansing, Illinois  
Services: 9:30 & 6:00  
Pastor: Rev. S. Houck  
Pastor's Phone: (708) 474-6064

South Holland P.R. Church  
16511 South Park Ave.  
South Holland, IL 60473  
Services: 9:30 & 6:00  
Pastor: Rev. C. Terpstra  
Pastor's Phone: (708) 333-1314

### WISCONSIN:

Randolph P.R. Church  
229 Hammond St.  
Randolph, WI 53956  
Services: 9:30 & 2:00  
Clerk's Phone: (414) 326-5610

### IOWA:

Doon P.R. Church  
408 6th Ave.  
Doon, IA 51235  
Services: 9:30 & 2:00  
Pastor: Rev. R. Dykstra  
Pastor's Phone: (712) 726-3382

Hull P.R. Church  
1204 Third St.  
Hull, IA 51239  
Services: 9:30 & 7:00 (Apr-Sept)  
9:30 & 1:30 (Oct-Mar)  
Pastor: Rev. R. Moore  
Pastor's Phone: (712) 439-1326

### IOWA:

Pella P.R. Church  
410 Franklin St.  
Pella, IA 50219  
Services: 9:30 & 7:00  
Pastor: Rev. W. Bekkering  
Pastor's Phone: (515) 628-4747

### MINNESOTA:

Edgerton P.R. Church  
Corner 3rd and Maple St.  
Edgerton, MN 56128  
Services: 9:30 & 7:30 (Mar-Nov)  
9:30 & 2:00 (Dec-Feb)  
Pastor: Rev. M. DeVries  
Pastor's Phone: (507) 442-4441

### SOUTH DAKOTA:

Hope P.R. Church  
Isabel, SD 57633  
Services: 9:00 & 2:00  
Clerk's Phone: (605) 466-2128

### TEXAS:

Trinity P.R. Church  
214 Barker-Clodine Rd.  
Houston, TX 77094  
Services: 9:30 & 6:00  
Pastor: Rev. R. Hanko  
Pastor's Phone: (713) 492-0844

### COLORADO:

Loveland P.R. Church  
709 E. 57th St.  
Loveland, CO 80537  
Services: 9:30 & 6:00 (Oct-May)  
9:30 & 7:00 (June-Sept)  
Pastor: Rev. R. Cammenga  
Pastor's Phone: (303) 667-1347

### CALIFORNIA:

Hope P.R. Church  
1307 E. Brockton Ave.  
Redlands, CA 92374  
Services: 10:00 & 7:00  
Pastor: Rev. A. denHartog  
Pastor's Phone: (714) 792-0307

### WASHINGTON:

Lynden P.R. Church  
108 Beernink Lane  
Lynden, WA 98264  
Services: 10:00 & 2:00  
Pastor: Rev. C. Haak  
Pastor's Phone: (206) 354-4337

### CANADA:

First P.R. Church (Edmonton)  
15911 107A Ave.  
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada  
Services: 11:00 & 3:00  
Pastor: Rev. T. Miersma  
Pastor's Phone: (403) 489-6470

Immanuel P.R. Church (Lacombe)  
C & E Trail and 50th Ave.  
(St. Cyprian's Anglican Church)  
Lacombe, Alberta, Canada  
Services: 11:30 & 4:00  
Pastor: Rev. D. Kuiper  
Pastor's Phone: (403) 782-5444



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# News From Our Churches

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Mr. Benjamin Wigger

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March 1, 1990

## MINISTERIAL CALLS

The congregation of the Randolph P.R.C. in Randolph, WI has extended a call to Rev. S. Key.

## MISSION ACTIVITIES

The Lord willing, Rev. G. Van Baren, along with his wife and youngest daughter, will be working with the Reformed Fellowship of Larne, Northern Ireland for six weeks, from the beginning of March to the middle of April. This is in response to a request that Rev. Van Baren and his consistory in Hudsonville, MI received from the Contact Committee of our Synod. You may also remember that Rev. Kortering and his wife were in Northern Ireland the first two months of this year.

The Consistory of the Hope P.R.C. in Redlands, CA sent a letter of appreciation to Rev. Houck and his family, expressing thanks for Rev. Houck's years of labor as the missionary of their church.

We could also add that our prayers are with the Houcks as they adjust to life in a parsonage, and Rev. Houck begins his labors in the congregation of Peace P.R.C., Lynwood, IL.

On behalf of the Mission Committee, Rev. Key went to Venice, FL to labor for two Sundays in

late January to evaluate the work there among the Florida residents.

## CONGREGATION ACTIVITIES

Rev. S. Houck was installed as the first pastor of the congregation of the Peace P.R.C. in Lynwood, IL on January 30. This is also Rev. Houck's first time serving in the capacity of pastor, having served our churches as missionary for the past 11 years. He was installed in a service held in the Illiana Christian High School auditorium. A program was planned afterwards with refreshments following in the cafeteria.

And, somewhat related to the above: I found it very striking that after Rev. den Hartog was installed in Redlands, CA he preached his first sermon on January 1, 1990. That should prove to be an easy date to remember.

On Sunday evening, December 31, after the evening service, the congregation of the Covenant P.R.C. in Wyckoff, NJ was invited to the parsonage for a singspiration and refreshments. The invitation read in part, "Let us be together during those last hours of 1989; a year that so clearly has marked that the day of the Lord is at hand."

With a view to a church dedication program in the future, the desire of several members in the Grandville P.R.C. in Grandville, MI was to organize a church choir to present a few numbers. Evidently there was

enough interest in Grandville, because recent bulletins have included reminders of choir practice.

Grandville's Worship Committee also asked for members who would like to apply for church organist. Information on their new church organ was also available at that time.

After the morning service on

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## Thirst For Christ

There is a hunger that the  
hearth-bread cannot satisfy.  
It rises from the souls of those  
touched by God's grace  
And burns and yearns until with  
anguished cry  
The sinner looks upon his  
Saviour's face.

There is a thirst mere water from  
a well  
Could never quench, though all  
its depths were drained.  
It is a thirst for Him to come  
and dwell  
Within, that life might be  
sustained.

Sweet Bread of fullness He, life's  
Well-spring, Jesus Christ,  
His body broken and His life-  
blood for us spilled.  
No other food for ransomed  
sinners has sufficed.  
Blessed are the ones who thirst  
and hunger after Him. They  
shall be filled.

—Sue Looyenga, 1989

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



January 21, the elders of the Loveland P.R.C. in Loveland, CO handed out to every family a copy of a booklet entitled, "Family Worship." This booklet contains the text of a sermon preached in 1827 by J.H. Merle d'Aubigne, a French Reformed minister. In this booklet d'Aubigne recommends to Christian parents the faithful practice of family devotions, and also gives practical advice for their practice of it. It is with a view to the flourishing of family devotions in their own homes that the elders distributed this booklet and urged its reading. A special thanks was also given to the Ladies Circle for underwriting the purchase of the booklets.

There was a note from the Consistory of the Doon P.R.C. in Doon, IA informing the congregation of the purchase of a new tape recorder, that makes possible the recording of two tapes at once, and the taping of the whole service (the machine automatically reverses). This purchase was made possible by donations from the Adult Bible Study and from an individual who receives Doon's tapes regularly.

There was also a thank you in the bulletin of Byron Center P.R.C. in Byron Center, MI concerning the members of their congregation who generously donated Bibles for the pews.

The Evangelism Committee of Byron Center P.R.C. has available tapes of the "Conference on Evangelism." The tapes are free on loan to individuals or societies or they may be purchased. There are three VCR tapes at \$8 each, or 3 cassette tapes at \$4 each. Write the Byron Center P.R.C.

Evangelism Committee, P.O. Box 71, Byron Center, MI 49315.

The congregation of the First P.R.C. in Holland, MI has approved the purchase of an Allen Organ. □

#### **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 Bernardine St., Lansing, IL 60438; [708] 474-4926), Board secretary.

#### **RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY**

The Adult Bible Class of Faith Protestant Reformed Church in Jenison, Michigan expresses its sincere sympathy to Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Kuiper in the death of his father, MR. JACOB KUIPER, SR.

"For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." (Phil. 1:21)

Rev. Ken Koole, President  
Sandra Tinklenberg, Secretary

#### **RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY**

The Senior Mr. and Mrs. Society of Hope Protestant Reformed Church expresses sympathy to Mr. and Mrs. Clare Kuiper and Mr. and Mrs. Art Bleyenbergh and their families in the death of their father MR. JACOB KUIPER, SR.

May they receive comfort in God's Word, "Thou shalt guide me by thy counsel and afterward receive me to glory."

Rev. J. Slopsema, Pres.  
Karla Kamps, Sec'y. Grand Rapids, MI

#### **RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY**

The Consistory of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Holland, MI expresses its heartfelt sympathy to its fellow officebearer, elder Warren Bonzelaar in the passing of his mother, MRS. JESSIE BONZELAAR.

May the family find their comfort in the Word of God: "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness." (Ps. 17:15)

Rev. Wilbur Bruinsma, Pres.  
John VanUffelen, Clerk

#### **WEDDING ANNIVERSARY**

On March 8, 1990, the Lord willing, with gratitude to God, our dear parents and grandparents BILL & THRES LENTING will celebrate 50 years of marriage.

We rejoice with them and are thankful to our Lord for the many years together and pray that they may continue to experience the blessings of our faithful God in the years that He may give them. "Know therefore that the Lord thy God, He is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations." (Deut. 7:9)

Marvin, Carolyn Davis  
Henry, Marcella Lenting  
Bill, Janet Lenting, Jr.  
Adrian, Kathy Lenting  
9 grandchildren  
2 great-grandchildren

South Holland, IL