

THE **STANDARD BEARER**

***A Reformed
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Magazine***



**Foreign Delegates
International Reformed Conference
Grand Rapids, MI – June 12-14, 1990**

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Contents

July 1, 1990

Meditation – <i>Rev. James D. Slopsema</i>	
FRIENDSHIP WITH THE WORLD: ENMITY WITH GOD	411
Editorials – <i>Prof. David J. Engelsma</i>	
THE COVENANT OF GOD AND	413
THE CHILDREN OF BELIEVERS (5)	
SLAUGHTERING BAPTISTS?	414
LETTERS	415
THE HOLY SPIRIT – HIS WORK IN THE	
ECONOMY OF SALVATION – <i>Rev. Charles J. Terpstra</i>	416
THE HOLY SPIRIT AND MISSIONS	
<i>Prof. Robert D. Decker</i>	420
THE WORK OF THE EVANGELICAL PRESBYTERIAN	
CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA – <i>Rev. Philip Burley</i>	422
THE PROMOTION OF MORE MEANINGFUL SISTER-CHURCH	
RELATIONSHIPS – <i>Rev. Rodney Miersma</i>	425
REPORT OF CLASSIS EAST – <i>Mr. Jon Huiskens</i>	429
BOOK REVIEW	430
NEWS FROM OUR CHURCHES – <i>Mr. Benjamin Wigger</i>	431

In This Issue...

Gathered at the entrance to First PRC in Grand Rapids, MI, as shown in the cover picture, are representatives of churches in the United Kingdom (both in Northern Ireland and in England), Australia, New Zealand, and Singapore. By today's standards not, perhaps, all that impressive... either as to number of churches or number of individuals involved in this "International Reformed Conference." But, to those who attended, it was indeed a moving experience. All too easy it is for churches and denominations to be near-sighted in their perspective, to be so engrossed in contending for the faith in their own little corner of the vineyard that, though they hold in their doctrine to the truth of the catholicity of the church, they nevertheless forget it in their life. A conference such as was held in Grand Rapids a couple of weeks ago, is a sure cure for that. Very quickly it becomes clear that the same Spirit Who works powerfully for the defense of the faith and the development of the truth of the Word of God in one group has done the same among other pockets of believers here and there throughout the world. One cannot help but be humbled by that, when he sits across the table from an Australian pastor who can give eloquent testimony to his church's experience of the same kind of struggles that characterize the history of one's own church. And, in listening to a Singaporean speak of the beginnings of a possible mission labor in India, and of the need for a Reformed Theological Seminary in Asia, we cannot help but be convicted of our need for and dependence on each other.

There's no way, of course, that the mere printing of speeches can convey the spirit which prevailed at that three-day conference. The latter is caught only by actual attendance, where one is able to hear the discussions which follow the speeches and to enjoy the fellowship during coffee breaks. Nevertheless, we have decided to include some of those addresses in this issue. Due to space restrictions we couldn't include them all. We'll try to pick up some of the remaining speeches in a future issue. For now, may the addresses included herein serve to impress us with the great blessing which is ours in this contact with those of different countries and cultures, with whom we can be united in the one faith and life of obedience in Christ Jesus.

– D.D.

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POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Standard Bearer, P.O. Box 6064, Grand Rapids, MI 49516.

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EDITORIAL OFFICE **CHURCH NEWS EDITOR**
The Standard Bearer Mr. Ben Wigger
4949 Ivanrest 6597 - 40th Ave.
Grandville, MI 49418 Hudsonville, MI 49426

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BUSINESS OFFICE

The Standard Bearer
Don Doezeema
P.O. Box 6064
Grand Rapids, MI
49516
PH: (616) 243-3712
(616) 531-1490

NEW ZEALAND OFFICE

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

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Meditation

Rev. James Slopsema

Friendship With The World: Enmity With God

Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be the friend of the world is the enemy of God.

— James 4:4

You adulterers and adulteresses!
This is how James addressed the church of his day.

I wonder whether he would be compelled to address the church today in the same manner?

James was probably writing to the Jewish Christians scattered by persecution into Syria. It becomes apparent that, in spite of the persecution they had experienced, these Christians were characterized by infighting. This internal fighting and warfare James attributed to their sinful lusts that warred in their members.

Nor is it difficult to see how these evil lusts and passions would also lead the saints into friendship with the world.

Hence, James was constrained by the Holy Spirit to remind them that friendship with the world is enmity with God. One who will be the

friend of the world is the enemy of God! In fact, friendship with the world makes the saints to be adulterers and adulteresses!

How important it is that we shun the friendship of the world that we may be the friends of God.

* * * * *

By addressing the members of the church as adulterers and adulteresses James suggested that saints of God are married. For adultery is unfaithfulness to one's marriage partner.

The marriage that is called to our attention is not earthly but rather heavenly and spiritual. The Scriptures frequently describe the relationship between God and the church or between Christ and the church in terms of marriage. Old Testament Israel was the wife of God. The New Testament church is the bride of Christ. In Jesus Christ we have been joined to God in a most blessed and eternal marriage. The marriage we enjoy as men and women on the earthly level is only a faint picture of this higher, spiritual marriage that is presupposed here.

Our spiritual marriage to God is a most delightful relationship of love and fellowship with the living God.

Consider the earthly marriage of a man and a woman. In that case marriage is a love relationship in which man and woman live one life together in close fellowship. In fact, there is no closer love relationship in all of life. In marriage a man and a woman become one flesh.

In like manner must we understand our spiritual marriage to God. Those who are married to God have entered into a love relationship with Him. They love Him dearly and in love delight to serve Him as their God. In this way of loving devotion and service those who are joined in marriage to God also enjoy God's love for them. This mutual love comes to expression in a most intimate fellowship and companionship. Those who are married to God are able to walk with Him and talk with Him. They live one life with the ever blessed God.

The wonder and beauty of this marriage is that it exists at all. For we did not seek this marriage with God. By nature we hate and oppose God. The thought of living in a close relationship of friendship and fellowship with God was far from our mind.

Nor is there anything attractive in us that would incline God's heart to us and to seek our hand in marriage.

Yet God loved us anyway! He has loved us with an eternal, unchangeable, elective love. In this love He has irresistibly drawn us to Himself in marriage. At great sacrifice to Himself He paid for all our sins in the person of His only begotten Son, thereby removing all the offense of our many sins. In His grace He has purified our hearts and lives. He has even created love for Himself in our hearts and thus has drawn us to Himself in marriage.

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

Married we are to the living God in Jesus Christ. This marriage is our very life and salvation.

* * * * *

But now we must deal with the world.

This world is the world of fallen, sinful mankind. With this world we are very familiar, for we live right in the middle of it. We meet the world when we go to our place of work. We are confronted with this world when we turn on the TV, listen to the radio, go to the newsstand and bookstore. Everywhere we go, wherever we turn, we are confronted with this world.

This world is the enemy of God. The world has nothing in its heart but hatred for the living God. It hates God's righteousness; it hates God's revelation; it hates God's commandments. All that is God's the world hates and despises. Consequently, the world not only tramples under foot the commandments of God, it also opposes God and the cause of God in every way it can. This great enmity arises out of a fallen nature not saved by the grace of God.

What is your relationship to this world?

It becomes apparent that many of the saints in James' day had cultivated a friendship with the world and had become the friends of the world.

Sorry to say, the same is also true of many in the church today.

Friendship involves especially two things: attraction and companionship. Friendships develop when two or more find in one another something that is mutually attractive and that draws them together. This can be a common interest, a common goal, even a common problem. But for some reason they are attracted to each other. And because they are attracted to each other they also seek each other's company. They delight to be with each other and to do things together.

These same elements apply to friendship with the world.

Those who are friends of the world are attracted to the world. That which they find attractive about the world is the sin and cor-

ruption of the world. They are tantalized by its immorality, its high living, its high-sounding philosophy that elevates man. Inevitably they seek out the world. They begin to live like the world, talk like the world, act like the world. More and more they fill their souls with the pleasures of the world. Inevitably this brings them into close, personal friendships with worldly, profane people. More and more their time is spent with worldly people; less and less with the saints of God.

Are you the friend of the world?

* * * * *

Let it be known that the friendship of the world is enmity with God. Whosoever will be the friend of the world is the enemy of God.

There is a basic principle that underlies this teaching of God's Word: when two are enemies of each other, one can not be the friend of both. This is not very difficult to understand. One of the basic elements of friendship is that one takes the side of his friend and champions his cause over against that of his enemies. If friendship means anything, it means that. Consequently, when two are enemies, you can not be the friend of both. You must choose which will be your friend. And that will necessarily make you the enemy of the other.

Especially is this true when it comes to God and the world. The world and God are enemies. The world hates God, and as the enemy of God seeks to destroy the cause of God. God, in turn, hates the world with an eternal hatred. As the world's enemy God opposes the world and will one day destroy the world.

In light of this, will you be the friend of the world?

Friendship with the world implies that in your heart you have essentially repudiated God: His perfection, His law, His cause in the world. It means that you long after the world rather than after the living God. And it requires that you join with the world in its opposition to the living God.

Yes, indeed, the friendship of the world is enmity with God. Whoso-

ever will be the friend of the world is the enemy of God. And the saint who cultivates the friendship of the world becomes unfaithful to the marriage he or she has with the living God. He is an adulterer. She is an adulteress.

* * * * *

Should we discover, upon examining ourselves, that we are, in fact, adulterers or adulteresses, let us in godly sorrow seek forgiveness of God. This can be found in Jesus Christ and in His blood.

And let us be faithful in our marriage to the living God.

Let us repudiate the world and become its enemies.

Let us develop and cultivate our friendship with the living God. This is done through prayer and the diligent, proper use of God's Word.

And to motivate us, let us remember the great love God has shown to us in making us His bride. He loved us who were unlovable. He has married us at great sacrifice to Himself. It cost Him His only begotten Son, Who died for us on the cross. In the marriage into which He has brought us He has blessed us richly with every good thing.

Shall we despise this great love by cultivating a friendship with His enemies... by becoming adulterers and adulteresses?

Shall we not rather, in humble gratitude, be faithful to our God, loving Him with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength? □

Kindness

Be swift, dear heart, in saying
The kindly word;
When ears are sealed thy
passionate pleading
Will not be heard.

Be swift, dear heart, in doing
The gracious deed;
Lest soon, they whom thou
holdest dearest
Be past thy need.

— Author Unknown

■ The Covenant of God and the Children of Believers (5)

■ Slaughtering Baptists?

■ The Covenant of God and the Children of Believers (5)

My treatment of the Reformed doctrine of the inclusion of the children of believers in the covenant of God, begun in the March 15, 1990 issue of *The Standard Bearer*, was interrupted by the special issue on preaching and by the editorial on Synod. The editorial in the issue of May 1 contended that the covenant is established with the elect children only and offered two grounds for this contention: 1) the rule of faith in Scripture that the covenant mercy of God is particular and sovereign; 2) the teaching on this very matter in Romans 9:1ff. The editorial in this issue picks up the argument at this point, proposing a third ground for the distinctive covenant view of the Protestant Reformed Churches. The treatment will conclude in the next issue of *The SB* with a consideration of the conversion of the covenant child. —Ed.

Third, this understanding of the place of children in the covenant is found in the Reformed tradition. Heinrich Heppe, who has distilled the essence of the Reformed tradition from the creeds and from the writings of the Reformed theologians, quotes the 17th century Reformed theologian, J. H. Heidegger, as expressing the Reformed view:

As for the adults, outward baptism does not seal inward grace for all of them, but for those alone who bear in their hearts a faith the reverse of feigned and confess it in words. Nor yet for the children of believing parents one and all, but only for the elect is baptism the sign of regeneration and universal spiritual grace. Although it is right and godly in the case of individual children of the kind to have good hopes of the judgment in love, in the case of them

all it is not so (Reformed Dogmatics, London, 1950, pp. 622, 623).

This has been a prominent view in Dutch Reformed theology since the *Afscheiding* (Secession) of 1834. In his book, *Prediking en uitverkiezing* (Preaching and Election, Kampen, 1959), Professor C. Veenhof, himself an advocate of the position that all children of believers are in the covenant by conditional promise, acknowledges that the position that referred the phrase in the baptism form, "our children...are sanctified in Christ," to the elect children was perhaps the dominant position in the churches of the Secession. This was the doctrine of Simon Van Velzen, the outstanding theologian in the churches of the Secession (cf. Veenhof, *Prediking*, pp. 66ff.).

Fourth, only this covenant view is in harmony with the Reformed confessions. The Westminster Confession holds the promise of the covenant of grace to be particular and unconditional: "...promising to give unto all those that are ordained unto life His Holy Spirit, to make them willing and able to believe" (7.3). In the chapter on baptism this Presbyterian creed teaches that the grace promised in baptism is strictly controlled by God's eternal predestination:

...the grace promised is not only offered, but really exhibited and conferred by the Holy Ghost, to such (whether of age or infants) as that grace belongeth unto, according to the counsel of God's own will, in His appointed time (28.6).

The Canons of Dordt restrict the promise of the gospel and the sacraments to believers (III, IV/8).

Since faith is the gift of God to the elect (III, IV, 14; I/9), the promise is for the elect. It cannot, therefore, fail (V/8).

On no other reading can the teaching of the Heidelberg Catechism in Q. 74 or the statements in the form of baptism that our children are "heirs of the kingdom of God and of His covenant" and that they are "sanctified in Christ," be true. If the reference is to every one of the children of believers, not to the elect among them, it simply is not true that "redemption from sin by the blood of Christ, and the Holy Ghost, the author of faith, is promised to them" (Heid. Cat.) or that they are "sanctified in Christ" (baptism form).

God realizes His covenant in the line of generations. He gathers His church from age to age from the children of believers. As the Puritans were fond of saying, "God casts the line of election in the loins of godly parents." For the sake of the elect children, all are baptized.

It is the covenantal election of God that determines the viewpoint that believing parents and church take toward the children and that governs the approach in rearing them. We do not view them as unsaved heathens ("little vipers"), though there may well be vipers among them, any more than we view the congregation as a gathering of unbelievers because of the presence of unbelievers among the saints. But we view them as children of God.

This matter of the parents' and church's view of the children is of great importance practically. Jonathan Edwards' view of the children as "little vipers," coupled with a tendency to base the assurance of being children of God upon subjective, doubtful experience, may well have been one of the main causes of the covenant's running out in New England, including Edwards' own church. The children learned their lesson well from the great teacher: The little vipers grew up to be big vipers. There was a judgment of God in this. To call that common which God has cleansed is forbidden (Acts 11:9). Although, like their believing parents, they retain a viperish nature, covenant children are not vipers, that is, children of the devil, but Jehovah's children (Ezek. 16:20, 21). They are not sinful flesh, spiritually like the devil; but they are holy (1 Cor. 7:14). Quite unlike the children of disobedience, who are ruled by the prince of the power of the air so that they have their conversation in the lusts of their flesh (Eph. 2:1-3), the baptized children of believers are in the Lord Jesus so that they honor their parents (Eph. 6:1ff.).

The same result of the error of viewing the children of believers as unsaved heathens appears in the churches that maintain this view today. As a rule, these churches are filled with young people who cannot be assured that they are genuine believers and saved children of God. Indeed, they grow old and die without ever enjoying the comfort of the covenant with God or being able to sit down with their covenant Friend at the covenant meal, although oddly enough they are permitted to make public confession of faith and to be members of the congregation (cf. C. Steenblock, *Rondom Verbond, Roeping en Doop*, Gouda, The Netherlands, 1979, pp. 44, 45; also C. Hegeman, *Explanation of the Reformed Doctrine*, Stickney, SD, 1965, p. 70). And the few who do arrive at the assurance of salvation derive this assurance, not from the promise of the covenant and baptism, but from some mystical experience.

Viewing their children as God's covenant children, believers must approach them as elect children in their teaching and discipline, even though there may indeed be reprobate and unregenerated children among them. Election determines the approach. All the children must receive the instruction that the regenerated must have and will profit from. By means of this rearing in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, the covenant promise will work the fruit of conversion in the elect children. —DJE

■ Slaughtering Baptists?

In the "Letters" column of this issue of *The Standard Bearer*, Baptist Pastor William Oosterman objects to my editorial on the Reformed doctrine of the covenant (*The SB*, April 15, 1990, "The Covenant of God and the Children of Believers"). Specifically he objects to the criticism of the Baptist position that is inherent in the covenant-doctrine of the Reformed faith.

Pastor Oosterman is careless with history. He charges that my spiritual ancestors in the 16th century slaughtered Baptists, suggesting that in condemning the Baptist error I am a child of my fathers who killed the prophets. My spiritual ancestor in the 16th century was John Calvin. Calvin did not slaughter Baptists (in those days they were called "Anabaptists" or "Catabaptists," i.e., rebaptizers). Instead, Calvin refuted them with sound doctrine, or converted them to the Reformed faith. In his thorough study, *Calvin and the Anabaptist Radicals*, Willem Balke writes: *The battle against the Anabaptists, which came to such a terrible climax in Munster shortly before Geneva turned to the Reformation, was waged with the word and with the pen by the Genevan reformer and his associates. Whenever the government of Geneva intervened, the result was invariably condemnation, but not bloodshed. No one, except the Antitrinitarian Servetus, was condemned to death (pp. 201, 202).*

Calvin also married a former Anabaptist.

Neither is it proved that Reformed Dutch Protestants killed

Baptists, much less participated in mass slaughter of those unfortunates. Like Calvin and virtually all Protestants of that age, the Reformed Church in The Netherlands had no use for freedom of religion. Accordingly, they forbade public worship of Anabaptists wherever they had influence with the State. But that they were responsible for killing the Anabaptists is doubtful. In his authoritative, sympathetic history of the Anabaptists, G. H. Williams speaks only of the industry of the Reformed clergy to refute or convert the Anabaptists, not of any industry to kill them. He notes, in fact, that the Anabaptists in The Netherlands gained security and finally freedom to worship when the Reformed came to power (cf. *The Radical Reformation*, pp. 777, 778).

A.L.E. Verheyden, like Williams wholly sympathetic to the Anabaptists, also observes that the Anabaptists enjoyed freedom from the threat of death in the north of the Lowlands when Calvinistic rule replaced that of the Roman Catholics. Although the Mennonites (Anabaptists) were condemned by the Reformed preachers as seditious and heretical, "they were nonetheless free from serious threats of the torture room, the stake, the gallows, or drowning" (cf. *Anabaptism in Flanders, 1530-1650: A Century of Struggle*, p. 83).

Pastor Oosterman could show a little more gratitude on behalf of the Anabaptists toward my spiritual ancestors than he does.

It is also a historical mistake to point to the widespread, severe afflictions of the 16th century Anabaptists as evidence of their godliness and soundness in the faith. Suffering for one's religious beliefs is not the same as suffering for Christ's sake. The fact is that the Anabaptists were heretical, altogether apart from their rejection of the one covenant of grace and infant baptism. They denied sovereign predestination, original sin, and justification by faith alone. They were strong advocates of the false gospel of salvation by the free will of the natural man. A leading Anabaptist, Menno Simons, denied

the real humanity of our Savior. Article 18 of the Reformed creed, the Belgic Confession, explicitly condemns this "heresy of the Anabaptists." And these were the best of the Anabaptists. The worst were antitrinitarians and receivers of direct revelations from the Holy Spirit.

Nor should the revolutionary spirit of the Anabaptists be dismissed so lightly ("using Munster as a pretext for branding 'every Baptist' as a heretic"). The Anabaptist revolution at Munster in 1534 shocked Europe and understandably brought suspicion upon all Anabaptists. But Munster was not the only Anabaptist revolt against the civil authorities. Anabaptists also played a prominent role in the Peasants' Revolt in Germany in

1525. Think of Thomas Munzer and Andreas Karlstadt. Revolution was not the aberration of a few, fanatical extremists among the Anabaptists, but marked the movement itself in the 1520s and 1530s. Therefore the Belgic Confession distances the Reformed Church from Anabaptism by confessing in Article 36, "we detest the Anabaptists and other seditious people, and in general all those who reject the higher powers and magistrates...."

Already Calvin exposed the error of the argument that the Anabaptists' suffering was proof of the soundness of their cause. With reference specifically to the death of the Anabaptist leader, Michael Sattler, Calvin wrote, "the death of a man, whatsoever he be, can not

be so precious, that it may or ought in any thing do prejudice to the verity of God, or can be available to prove erroneous and perverse doctrine" (*Against Anabaptists*, quoted in Balke, *Calvin and the Anabaptist Radicals*, p. 176).

Jesus does not pronounce everyone blessed who suffers for his religious convictions. Rather, He blesses those who are persecuted "for My sake," i.e., for the sake of the truth (Matt. 5:11).

Surely Pastor Oosterman, who confesses to holding the doctrines of grace, does not wish to identify himself with the Anabaptists of the 16th century! Or is it indeed the position of the "Calvinistic Baptists" today that the Anabaptists of the 16th century were their spiritual ancestors? □ — DJE

Letters

The Baptist Objection

During the reformation period in Holland, from 10-50,000 Baptists were put to death by co-operating Roman Catholic and Protestant Churches. This was the result of a *deliberate refusal* to listen to what the Baptists were saying, while using Munster as a pretext for branding "every baptist" as a heretic. You are an educated man, and as such should know better. In your "Covenant" editorial (*The SB*, April 15, 1990), you seriously misrepresent us and make some very false accusations, the kind that led your spiritual ancestors to slaughter Baptists. Please print the following as a letter in the next issue, to further prevent such animosity between blood-bought believers.

The following are quotes from the article, "The Covenant of God

and the Children of Believers," and a corresponding correction:

1. "Here the Reformed faith — Calvinism — parts company with all Baptists" (DJE).

Where have you been? Even the current handbook of denominations in America lists the Reformed/Calvinist Baptists as a separate group of churches. And what about Spurgeon, Carey, and the Gospel Standard Churches of England, or Trinity Pulpit in America?

2. "Every Baptist seriously errs...every Baptist holds that the children of believers are lost heathens outside the church.... There are no children in that church" (DJE).

How wrong. As a Baptist who believes in *total depravity* (and the other four points of "Calvinism") I believe that all children are "children of wrath, even as others" (Eph. 2:1, 2), until they are made alive. You confess later in the arti-

cle that some of your own baptized children "grow up ungodly, unbelieving, and disobedient, and perish. God is not their God." Well, as Baptists, we have been welcoming believers into fellowship and into our churches as MEMBERS, of all ages. If a five-year-old understands, believes, and repents he/she is baptized and becomes a member. You are so far from the truth that I can safely say that *most* of the Baptist churches I know have children who are members. Unlike your churches, we welcome a child who believes in Jesus even when the parents don't believe.

3. "Every Baptist Church denies membership to all children" (DJE).

I know of no such Baptist church anywhere. How many of our constitutions have you ever examined? Have you heard of the 1689 Confession, so similar to the Westminster?

4. "The Baptist Church will not suffer the little children to come to Christ, but forbids them" (DJE).

It was in the angry atmosphere created by such false statements that Reformed Dutch Protestants killed Baptists. We invite all who believe to join, as the church allows only believers to unite with the body of Christ. Age is no barrier, as witnessed by J. Edwards in *Narrative of Surprising Conversions*.

5. "Among the other implications of this grim teaching...is that there is no ground for any hope of the election and salvation of the children of believers who die in infancy or in early childhood" (DJE).

Wrong again. I could quote from a dozen Baptists beginning with Spurgeon, who hold the view that all who die in infancy AND THE ABORTED CHILDREN are elect and will be known in heaven, regardless of who the parents were. The infant-baptist, Dr. Dabney, agreed with Spurgeon on this. But what hope can you offer to a grieving mother who has not had a child sprinkled? The child died a pagan

for lack of a few drops of water and is in hell as a heathen.

Finally, do not set up a false position and then seek to defend your own. Be fair. The Baptist Pastor, David Kingdon, has written a book worthy of your study called *Children of Abraham*. With the recent revival of Calvinism among Baptists, let us learn to rejoice in common ground and cease all forms of misrepresentation.

Wm. Oosterman

Pastor, Parkland Baptist Church
London, Ontario, Canada

RESPONSE

My reply to this Baptist objection against the Reformed doctrine of the covenant appears in the editorial column of this issue of *The Standard Bearer*. A second installment of the reply, treating the theological aspects of the objection, will follow in the August 1 issue.

Pastor Oosterman recommends the book by David Kingdon, *Children of Abraham*. Kingdon makes a

valiant effort to harmonize the Baptist denials that baptism has come in the place of circumcision and that the infants of believers are included in the covenant with the Reformed doctrine of the unity of the covenant of grace. He fails. If circumcision does not find its fulfillment in baptism, and if the promise of the old covenant to the children of godly parents is not maintained under the new covenant, the covenant with Israel and the covenant with the church are two, fundamentally different covenants. This is the Baptist's position, willy-nilly. He cannot escape it.

I have read Kingdon's book. Has Pastor Oosterman read Professor Herman Hanko's refutation, *We and Our Children*?

The fifth in my series of editorials on the covenant appears in this issue of *The SB*. A sixth, concluding installment will follow. I hope that the intrusion of the present controversy (welcome, of course) does not detract from following the line of the series on the covenant through to the end. □ — Ed.

The Holy Spirit – His Work in the Economy of Salvation

Rev. Charles Terpstra

INTRODUCTION

To say that the work of the Holy Spirit in salvation is of vital importance is perhaps to state the obvious. Nevertheless, this must be our starting point. No individual believer and no church of Christ

would dare slight or minimize the work of the Spirit in salvation. It is not too much to say that without Him there would be no persons saved and no church gathered. The Spirit is the indispensable Applicator of the blessings of salvation Christ has merited for His own in His death and resurrection. Indeed John Calvin is correct in his judgment that, "as long as Christ remains outside of us, and we are separated from him, all that he has

suffered and done for the salvation of the human race remains useless and of no value for us." How then does Christ become of use and value to the elect according to Calvin? "...He unites himself to us by the Spirit alone. By the grace and power of the same Spirit we are made his members, to keep us under himself and in turn to possess him."

Yet in spite of this vital importance of the Spirit's work in salva-

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



Rev. Kamps introduces Rev. Charles Terpstra.

tion, the doctrine of the Person and work of the Holy Spirit has not always received the attention it deserves. J.I. Packer backs this assessment when he refers to the doctrine of the Holy Spirit as the "Cinderella of Christian doctrines."² It is not the case that the church ignored and was silent about the work of the Spirit; she was merely very brief and did not fully delineate the Spirit's role in salvation. Of late, however, this has changed. Due most likely to the emphases and excesses of the Pentecostal movement, the church has taken a closer look at the work of the Holy Spirit, setting forth more clearly and fully the role of the Spirit in salvation. This is good, since we owe so much to this divine Person. And therefore, this subject which we here treat is worthy of our attention.

We begin this study of the Spirit's work in salvation with the understanding that this subject is exceedingly *broad*. A hasty glance through a Bible Concordance will reveal that the role of the Spirit in the salvation of men is truly great. The Spirit is ascribed many titles and is connected with a host of activities in salvation. There are, then, many different aspects of the Spirit's work which one could treat, given the topic we have. One could consider, e.g., the work of the Spirit and regeneration, or the Spirit and sanctification. Or one could consider the work of the Spirit in the elect church as a body and deal with such things as the

Spirit and Pentecost, or the Spirit and His gifts in the church. But obviously, we cannot treat the entire scope of the Spirit's role; we must needs limit our subject.

In this article it is my intent to focus on only a couple of aspects of the Spirit's work in salvation, but from a somewhat unique perspective. We will consider the Spirit as the Author of life, as the Revealer of truth, and as the Realizer of salvation's goal; and we will do that from the viewpoint of the parallels between the Spirit's work in creation and His work in the recreation of the elect sinner. We say that this is a *somewhat* unique perspective, because there have been others who have made this parallel, Abraham Kuyper being one, in his monumental work *The Work of the Holy Spirit*, and R.C. Sproul being another, in his recent book *The Mystery of the Holy Spirit*. I will, therefore, use what they have done, but also expand on it.

There is one other point on which we ought to be clear before we commence our study, and that is that the Spirit about Whom we write we believe to be a distinct Person of the Godhead and thus fully divine (God). Even though our subject is the Spirit's *economic* role and not His *essential* place in the Trinity, yet these two roles cannot be separated. The Holy Spirit Whom we believe to be the One Who applies the salvation God the Father planned and God the Son accomplished is the Holy Spirit Whom we believe and confess "from eternity proceeds from the Father and the Son...; who in order is the third person of the Holy Trinity; of one and the same essence, majesty and glory with the Father and the Son: and therefore, is the true and eternal God..." (Belg. Conf., Art. XI).

THE HOLY SPIRIT AS THE AUTHOR OF LIFE

The Holy Spirit is inseparably connected with life in the Bible. He is everywhere referred to as the Originator of life, both in creation and in salvation. This is the first parallel we make. One of the titles given to Him in the Scriptures is "the Spirit of life" (Rom 8:2). Of

this truth we sing too in *Psalter* #287: "Thy Spirit, O Lord, makes life to abound...."

This is the Spirit's role in creation. In Psalm 33:6 we read of the truth that all the host of heaven was made by the "breath" of God's mouth, referring to the Spirit. We are also familiar with the fact that the Spirit of God "moved upon the face of the waters" in the beginning of creation. Edward H. Bickersteth informs us that this "moving" of the Spirit involved His giving life to the creation: "The Hebrew word implies the tremulous fluttering or brooding of a bird over its nest, infusing life from its own vital warmth."³ The life-giving Spirit was also involved in the creation of man. When God made man, He formed him "of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath (i.e., Spirit) of life..." (Gen. 2:7). Adam was quickened by the Spirit. So too Job ascribes his life and existence to the Holy Spirit: "The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life" (Job 33:4). Referring to one more passage, we find that in Psalm 104:30 the Spirit is related to the life of the animal world and the renewal of the earth: "Thou sendest forth thy Spirit, they are created: and thou renewest the face of the earth." We concur then with A. Kuyper who writes that it is the Spirit "who *animates* every rational being; who sustains the *principle of life* in every creature."⁴ For this reason the early church in its Nicene Creed confessed the Spirit as "the Lord and Giver of life."

It ought not be surprising therefore that the Spirit is also spoken of as the Author of life in the salvation of elect sinners. He is the Originator of the new life of regeneration. R.C. Sproul draws the parallel where he writes, "As He is the generating power of biological life, so is He the source and generating power of spiritual life. His work in redemption mirrors and supplements His work in creation."⁵ And Sproul's chapter on regeneration he aptly entitles "The New Genesis."

Throughout the Old and New Testament Scriptures the Holy

Spirit is identified as the One Who causes the dead sinner to be made spiritually alive. The classic passage in the Old Testament is Ezekiel 37:1-14. There in vision the prophet sees a valley full of dry bones, symbolizing spiritually lifeless and hopeless Israel. But Ezekiel is commanded to prophesy to these bones and God promises to make them live. And so after he calls to the wind to breathe upon these bones, the breath came into them and the bones lived. This wind symbolized the life-giving Spirit of God, as God Himself explained to the prophet in verse 14. Here we have an Old Testament picture of the Spirit's work of regeneration.

This truth we find more clearly revealed in the New Testament. The classic New Testament passage is John 3:1-8, where Jesus explains to Nicodemus the great truth that the natural man, who is by nature "flesh," i.e., spiritually dead in sin so that he cannot even see the kingdom of God, must be born again from above unto new, heavenly life by the Spirit. The Holy Spirit alone is the Author of this life in man. This truth is found in many other places. In John 6:63 Jesus said, "It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing...." In Romans 8:10 Paul teaches: "And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness." This same connection between the Spirit and the spiritual life of salvation we find in II Corinthians 3:6 and Galatians 6:8.

It must be stressed that in this work of imparting eternal life to the elect sinner the Spirit is absolutely *sovereign*. It is a work performed by Him exclusively, without the will and cooperation of the sinner. Just as the original creation came to life not of itself but only through the quickening Spirit, so also does the totally depraved, dead sinner come to life not of himself or by assisting the Holy Spirit, but only through the life-giving Spirit. This has to be stressed over against all those proud, synergistic theories of men, who teach that the sinner can prepare himself to be

born again, or is able to choose to be made spiritually alive by the power of his free will, or actually helps the Spirit in the work of being regenerated. All such Pelagian and Arminian errors are condemned by Scripture and by our Confessions, as for example, Canons III/IV, Arts. 12, 14. The Spirit alone is the Author of the new life in man. This truth is not merely one of the doctrines of Scripture and Calvinism; it is the believer's experience. He knows in the depths of his own heart that he is born again unto newness of life solely by the Spirit of life, and not by anything he has done or willed to do.

THE HOLY SPIRIT AS THE REVEALER OF TRUTH

The Scriptures also join together the Holy Spirit and the work of revealing God's truth to the sinner. The Spirit is He Who illuminates, bringing things to light; Who enlightens, giving understanding; Who opens up the truth, causing it to be known and embraced. Already in Genesis 1:2, 3 there is a close connection made between the Spirit and illumination in the work of creation. As the Spirit moved upon the face of the waters, God uttered His first command: "Let there be light." The Spirit was the One through Whom God brought His light to shine upon the creation, thus preparing His creatures for life and motion.

So it is in the realm of salvation. It is the Spirit's work to reveal the spiritual things of God to man the sinner. Man is by nature in spiritual darkness; his mind is void of the true knowledge of God and himself and the world in which he lives; his understanding is darkened; and his heart is blind (Eph. 4:17, 18). And because man's will is bound in sin, he does not want to know the truth. As Jesus said in John 3:19, men love darkness rather than the light. Without the illumination of the Spirit, natural man is unable to know anything about the kingdom of heaven and its spiritual realities, let alone being able to seek entrance into it. But Christ, Who is the light of the world (Jn. 9:5), dispenses His Spirit to His elect in or-

der that they might be illuminated to know and understand the truth. Just as God in the beginning commanded the light to shine out of darkness by the Holy Spirit, so He has shined in our hearts by the same Spirit, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ (II Cor. 4:6).

This truth of the Spirit's work of revealing spiritual things to the sinner's heart and mind is set forth clearly in I Corinthians 2:10ff. You will note here the close relation between the Spirit's role within the Godhead (His essential role) and His role in salvation (economic role). The Spirit is the One Who searches the deep things of God; He has perfect knowledge and understanding of the spiritual things of God. But these things of God He reveals unto us, so that we have the wisdom of God, the knowledge and understanding of the truth. You will also notice the sharp contrast made here between the natural man and the spiritual man, verses 11, 14. This same emphasis we find in other New Testament texts. In Ephesians 1:17, 18 Paul prays on behalf of the Ephesian Christians that they might be given the "Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened...." This work of the Spirit is implied in Jesus' promise to send the Spirit of truth, Who would take the things of Jesus and reveal them to His people, and thus guide them into the truth (cf. Jn. 14:17, 26; 15:26; 16:13-15). This promise was fulfilled in the pouring out of the Spirit on Pentecost, for that Spirit inspired the apostles to write the New Testament Scriptures, and through those Scriptures the Spirit has guided the church into the truth in all ages.

On this work of the Spirit the believer also lives in conscious dependence. He knows he owes his saving knowledge of God to the Spirit; he knows he depends on the Spirit for the understanding and application of the reading and hearing of the Word; he knows he needs the Spirit for the knowledge of his sins; in sum, he knows that he is indebted to the Spirit for all his light.

He gives thanks and prays for the Spirit as his divine Revealer.
THE HOLY SPIRIT AS THE REALIZER OF SALVATION'S GOAL

By this we have in mind the idea that the Holy Spirit is the One through Whom God brings all things to the goal He has purposed, viz., perfection in the new creation. He is the divine Realizer of God's plans, both with regard to the creation and with regard to His elect people. A. Kuyper makes this point in his work of the Spirit: "Thus to lead the creature to its destiny, ...to make it perfect, is the proper work of the Holy Spirit." Closely related to this work of the Spirit is His work of preserving all things until God's purposes are fully realized. The Spirit is also the Preserver of God's works. We find this truth about the Spirit from His work in creation first of all. In connection with the Spirit's role of "brooding" over the waters in the beginning of creation, it may also be pointed out that this implies the Spirit's sustaining power. R.C. Sproul makes this point in connection with Genesis 1:2: "Part of the Spirit's work is to 'hover' over creation, keeping things intact. In this regard we see the Spirit as the divine Preserver and the Protector. The Spirit works to maintain what the Father brings into being." What we have to understand is that the Spirit upholds the creation in order to bring it to God's completed goal in the new heavens and earth.

This work of the Spirit in upholding and realizing God's works must also be applied to His work in the salvation of the elect. It is God's goal to bring His people to perfection, to eternal glory, to that state in which they are without sin and death, and in which they are fully in His image in Jesus Christ. And the Holy Spirit is His agent to realize this goal. The Spirit leads the elect to perfection. This He does first of all by preserving His work of salvation in the elect, so that they are kept in grace and do reach their goal. This idea we recognize as the fifth point of historic Calvinism — the preservation of

the saints. The Spirit preserves the life of regeneration in His people. He indwells the elect and keeps them in union with Christ. He powerfully keeps His own in sanctification, helping them in the fight against sin and evil, and giving them the victory.

This preservation of the Spirit is beautifully taught in the Scriptures. In II Corinthians 1:22 and Ephesians 1:13, 14 we find the ideas of the sealing of the Spirit and the Spirit as our earnest. To be sealed with the Spirit means that due to the indwelling of the Spirit, our salvation and perfection are secured. We are marked by the Spirit as being God's, and nothing can make us lose our seal. And again, because of the indwelling of the Spirit, the elect have God's downpayment and thus His guarantee that they will reach their goal, the inheritance of eternal glory. Romans 8:19ff. tie together the creation's desire for perfection with God's people's. And it shows that our groaning for glory is due to the fact that we have the firstfruits of the Spirit. In Him we have the first cutting of the harvest, and thus the pledge of the full harvest in the day of Jesus Christ.

Yet, in the second place, the Spirit is also the One Who actually brings about our perfection in glory. He is the Realizer of our salvation and He brings it to pass by

His saving work. When the believer dies, it is the Spirit Who ushers the soul into the bosom of Jesus. And in the end of time it is the Spirit Who is said to be the One to raise our bodies and bring us into the perfection of the new creation. Just as Christ was quickened according to the body by the Spirit, so also will the elect be in the day of their resurrection (Rom. 8:11). In fact, the Scripture teaches in II Corinthians 3:18 that the believer is already in this life changed into the same image as his glorious Lord, from glory to glory, by the Spirit of the Lord. Is it any wonder then, that the apostle Peter refers to the Spirit as "the Spirit of glory"? (cf. I Pet. 4:14).

With this Spirit in his heart the believer has an assured hope and confident expectation of reaching the goal. With this thought we conclude using the apostle's benediction in Romans 15:13: "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost." □

1. *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, John Calvin, p. 541, Vol. 2 of McNeill ed., Westminster Press, 1973.

2. *Knowing God*, J.I. Packer, p. 60, Intervarsity Press, 1973.

3. *The Holy Spirit, His Person and Work*, Edward H. Bickersteth, p. 14, Kregel, 1976.

4. *The Work of the Holy Spirit*, Abraham Kuyper, p. 26, Funk and Wagnalls, 1900.

5. *The Mystery of the Holy Spirit*, R.C. Sproul, p. 90, Tyndale, 1990.

6. *Work*, Kuyper, p. 21.

7. *Mystery*, Sproul, p. 85.

Thank Thee, Lord

Bow down Thine ear, O Lord, to hear
 For I, Thy loving child, come near
 To rest in Thee, my only dwelling place;
 For joy in service, strength through prayer,
 Relief from every shade of care,
 For bliss of sins forgiven through Thy grace,
 I sing my praises to Thy name,
 Yesterday, today, the same,
 And also ever more!

I thank Thee, too, for giving me
 A vision of eternity
 When my soul among the sons of God was born;
 So for life here which Thou dost bless
 And a life beyond of happiness
 Where the dusk of years shall end in heaven's morn,
 I would adore Thee as I ought,
 Remembering Thy blood has bought
 My peace forevermore!

— Grace W. Haight

The Holy Spirit and Missions

Prof. Robert Decker

One cannot help but note a vast difference between the Old and New Testament eras.

The Holy Spirit "was not yet" in the Old Testament (John 7:37-39). This does not mean that the Holy Spirit did not work in the Old Testament. In I Peter 1:10-12 we read this: "...of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into." This teaches that the Spirit did work, and that too as the Spirit of Christ. The Holy Spirit of Christ certainly was active in the work of salvation in the Old Testament. But He was limited to the types and the shadows. When the Holy Spirit testified of the sufferings of Christ to the prophets He signified these things.

In the New Testament this is different. The types find their fulfill-

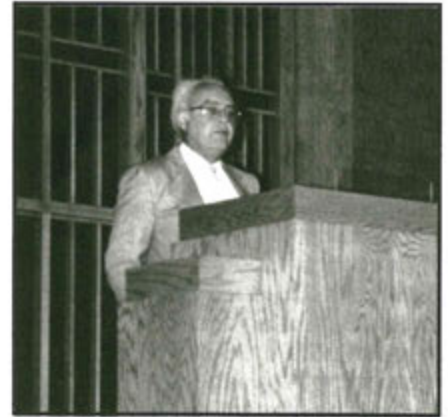
ment in Jesus Christ, in His cross and resurrection and ascension to glory. Now the Spirit brings to the church, by means of the Word, the realities of the finished work of Christ. No longer is the church limited to the typical theocracy in Israel, but the elect are gathered out of all nations by the Spirit and Word of the exalted Lord Christ.

All this begins with the wonder of Pentecost. Prior to Pentecost, even as late as the ascension of our Lord, the disciples do not understand the work of Jesus. With Jesus on Mt. Olivet, just moments before He ascends to glory, the disciples ask, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6).

Mind you, this is after the cross and resurrection and the Lord's post-resurrection appearances to them. Jesus answers, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons...but ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:7-8).

When Pentecost comes and the Spirit is poured out, they received power indeed! Now suddenly they understand! And Peter can preach that marvelous sermon out of the prophecy of Joel concerning the coming of the Day of the Lord! And the fruit is that 3,000 believe!

The wonder of Pentecost can never be over emphasized! The Holy Spirit plays an indispensable role in the gathering of the church out of the nations. For it is through the Holy Spirit that Jesus returns to be with His church, and it is through the Holy Spirit that the



Prof. Robert Decker

Son of God gathers out of the whole human race those chosen to everlasting life! To the work of missions, therefore, the Holy Spirit is indispensable.

We define missions as that work of God in Christ by which, through the official ministry of the Word by the church, He gathers His elect in the new dispensation out of all nations, both Jew and Gentile, with a view to the manifestation of His glory in the new heavens and earth. There are several elements in this definition which deserve our attention. In the first place, missions is emphatically and exclusively the work of God in Christ by the Holy Spirit of Christ. Secondly, missions is accomplished by means of the official preaching of the gospel by the institute of the church of Jesus Christ. Thirdly, missions has as its immediate goal the gathering of the elect church, both Jew and Gentile, out of the nations. And, fourthly, missions has as its ultimate goal (*telos*) the full manifestation of God's glory in Christ in the new creation.

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

Think of it! In no less a task than the gathering of the elect is the church of Christ involved! God, by means of the preaching of the Word by the church, saves His church and brings the world of unbelief and sin into judgment to the glory of His name!

Two crucial implications of this are that missions belongs to the very essence of the task of the church. One cannot conceive of the church apart from missions! A church that does not engage in missions fails in her task, is disobedient to her Lord, and is not worthy of the name church. This is, at the same time, a powerful incentive for the church to be busy in missions! Why fear or doubt or be discouraged? Why despise the day of small things? God accomplishes His great purpose through the foolishness of preaching. It is His work, and His purpose will be achieved! Let us be getting on then with the task!

The Holy Spirit, we said, is indispensable to the work of missions. Jesus spoke of this often, especially in John, chapters 14-16. Jesus tells the disciples that He is going to prepare a place for them in His Father's house of many mansions. He promises that the Father will give them the Comforter Who is the Spirit of truth. The world cannot receive the Spirit, but He will dwell with the disciples and be in them. Then Jesus says, "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you" (vss. 16-18). Jesus will be with them through the Spirit of Truth, the Comforter.

In this same chapter, verses 25 and 26, Jesus identifies the Comforter as the Holy Ghost. The Father will send the Comforter in the name of Christ. The Spirit will teach the disciples all things and remind them of everything Jesus taught them. According to John 15:26-27, the Comforter (Spirit of Truth) Who proceeds from the Father will testify of Christ. The fruit of that testimony of the Spirit will be that the disciples will bear witness of Christ.

In John 16:5-15 Jesus tells the disciples that it is **EXPEDIENT** for them that He depart, for if He does

not depart the Comforter will not come, whereas if He does, He will send the Comforter to them. When the Comforter comes He will reprove the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment.

Again Jesus speaks of the Comforter as the Spirit of Truth. The Spirit of Truth will not speak of Himself, but will speak of that which He hears from Christ. Thus the Spirit will guide the disciples into all the truth, and in this way He will glorify Christ.

In this light we can understand the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20). Jesus commands the disciples to teach all nations and to baptize in the name of the Triune God. And He promises that He will be with them always, even unto the end of the world. This can only mean that Jesus is with the church through the Holy Spirit. Christ comes to live with us in the Spirit. This is the meaning of Jesus' promise to the disciples just moments before He ascended (Acts 1:4-11). They will be baptized with the Holy Spirit and through the Spirit they will receive power. By that power of the Spirit of Christ they will be witnesses of Christ in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the uttermost part of the earth.

This is precisely what happened when the Spirit was poured out. The record of this we have in the Book of Acts. Acts records the history of the early expansion of the church...or the history of missions under the leadership of the apostles. It begins with the ascension of Christ and ends with the apostle Paul in prison in Rome. Acts records the spread of the gospel beyond the Jews and among the Gentiles. At first the apostles labored among the Jews (the only exception being Philip's work among the Samaritans, Acts 8). Subsequent to Peter's vision of the unclean animals and the conversion of Cornelius and his house, Acts records the gathering of the church out of the nations. And all of this would have been impossible without the pouring out of the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of Christ.

Acts really teaches us one, great principle of missions, viz., it is ex-

clusively the work of the exalted Lord Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit! This is evident from the introduction to the Book, chapter 1:1-2. The former treatise is Luke's Gospel narrative in which he records that which Jesus *began* both to do and to teach. Hence, by implication, what we have in Acts is that which Jesus *continued* both to do and to teach.

From this point of view the book is not really the Acts of the Apostles but the Acts of the exalted Lord Christ. That missions is the work of Christ through the Holy Spirit is evident throughout the Book. Christ sheds forth the Spirit and by the Spirit Christ accomplishes His work through the Apostles (Acts 2:33; 3:6, 16; 4:8-12; 30-31). Christ's leading through the Spirit is also evident in the death of Stephen and the consequent persecution and dispersion of the Jewish Christians (Acts 8:1; 11:19ff.). Christ sends Philip to the Ethiopian eunuch (8:26-29). Christ calls Paul to preach to the Gentiles (9:4-15). The apostle Paul was led by Christ through the Spirit throughout his ministry (Acts 13:2-4). Acts 13:52 tells us that because of the conversion of many Gentiles in Perga and Antioch the disciples were filled with joy and the Holy Ghost. (Cf. Acts 16:6-7.) The message of Acts as far as missions is concerned is that Christ is present with His church in the Spirit! The crucified, risen Lord Jesus Christ Who has all power in heaven and on earth. He has returned, as He promised, to be with the church in the Spirit.

Before the Spirit is poured out, the church is a little group of 120 believers. They are waiting, praying in an upper room in Jerusalem. They do not understand, do not know what to expect. But then the Spirit is poured out! Suddenly they understand, and Peter preaches a marvelous sermon on Joel 2: The Day of the Lord is here! Christ brings 3,000 to conversion! Christ through the Spirit drives the church out into the world. The church then becomes a mighty host, the Lord adding daily to it such as should be saved. The apostles are given great boldness. These, who

had formerly been unlearned and ignorant, are given boldness in the faith; courage to stand before kings and governors; strength to endure all kinds of opposition, abuse, and persecution, even death! All this through the grace of Jesus Christ Who was present with them through the Holy Spirit.

That same Lord Jesus Christ is present with us today! The com-

mand is the same: "Make disciples of all nations; preach the gospel of the kingdom to the ends of the earth as a witness to the nations." The promise is the same: "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

Christ is with us through the Holy Spirit. He comforts us, strengthens us, enables us to be His witnesses. Through these means

Christ gathers His elect out of the nations to the glory of God!

May God give us grace to be faithful to this great task, the one thing He told His church to do, viz., preach the Word to the nations! □

The Work of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Australia

Rev. Philip Burley

The Evangelical Presbyterian Church (E.P.C.) has been in existence since July 29, 1961 (though it was first constituted under the name "Reformed Evangelical Church").

In order to gain an appreciation of the work of the E.P.C. it will be necessary to look at the background and formation of the church. We will, therefore, consider this subject under three headings.

BACKGROUND AND FORMATION

In the early 1950s there were groups of earnest sincere Christians throughout Tasmania. These

people were then attached to different denominations: Baptist, Church of Christ, Methodist, Presbyterian, to name a few. They were grieved by the departure of these denominations from the fundamentals of the Christian faith. Some of the truths no longer taught included the complete inspiration of the Scripture, the need for the new birth, separation from ungodliness, and the need of holiness. These people were also frustrated in their attempts to address the problems that faced them in their churches and by the lack of willingness on the part of their ministers to hear their protests against the rising tide of modernism, humanism, and liberal theology that was sweeping through their churches.

The result of all this was that some were forced out and others left of their own accord. Thus a loose fellowship network came into being, and eventually drew these Bible-believing Christians together. These believers and the

loose fellowship organizations were Arminian, mostly Baptist, and independent in character. As they fought a common enemy they gradually became aware of the existence of one another. The result was that there was an exchange of speakers, missions were held in the different centers, and many people made decisions at the evangelistic meetings, some in tents, some in the open air. The speakers were full of zeal and were determined to serve their Lord with all their hearts. They sacrificed much to take their message to all men.

It was not long before they were faced with bitter disappointment. Many of those who had made "decisions" at their meetings fell away and did not go on to manifest the fruits of true faith. This caused them to ask the question, what is wrong? Is there something wrong with our message? They came to the conclusion that there must be more to the Gospel than they knew. Some of them started to read Charles Finney, who placed much

Rev. Burley is pastor of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Winalah, Tasmania, Australia.

emphasis on repentance. Soon there was a very heavy emphasis on repentance. They now had fewer converts, for they were making it harder for people to make a decision, since they were preaching more "works."

In the late 1950s, in their search for the answers to their problems, they came across some "Reformed" publications such as Jonathan Edward's *Religious Affections*, George Whitefield's sermons, and the Westminster Confession of Faith. One of Spurgeon's sermons entitled "Salvation Altogether of Grace" was greatly used at this time. Early Banner of Truth Trust publications began to appear and books published by the Sovereign Grace Publishers were circulated. All of a sudden there was an amazing work of God's grace, a revival of truth. The doctrines of human depravity and of God's sovereign grace were at the very center of this work of God. Their preaching which had been man-centered now became God-centered, and God-honoring.

On the 29th of July, 1961, a number of these fellowships were constituted the Reformed Evangelical Church, by the ordination of three of their already serving pastors. Elders were also called by the people and set apart by ordination. The following is the original "Declaration of Intention."

On the 29th of July, 1961, the Pastors and Elders from our Reformed congregations met to finalize arrangements for the constituting of the Reformed Evangelical Church, and for the ordination of a Presbytery in Tasmania.

The Standards and Formularies of the Church shall be, the Westminster Confession of Faith, the Larger and Shorter Catechism, the form of Presbyterian Church Government, and the Directory of Public Worship as originally accepted by the Church of Scotland, which includes the original Calvinistic principle of things not commanded in Scripture, (either expressly, or by good and necessary consequence deduced from its statements) are forbidden in worship.

As history has ever proved that unity in the Church is best maintained in the unity of the Spirit and truth, and not necessarily in adopting the name of a visible organization of any older established denomination, and believing that this unity in our ranks can be best maintained thus, we agreed to

this position, which we believe to be the true Scriptural one.

We have prayerfully considered, and do deeply appreciate the advice and assistance of mature Reformed brethren in the faith concerning the principle of the ecumenicity of the Church, and believe the way we have chosen is not inconsistent with this principle.

The ordination of our first members of Presbytery will be conducted by a Presbytery from the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia (Free Church).

It is our earnest desire to co-operate in the promulgation of the Reformed Faith in our land to the fullest possible extent with all who are militant for the Reformed Faith.

Praying that our generation shall see a Reformation that enthrones God, that establishes righteousness, unmask false religion, and strips sinners of vain confidence.

This historic statement reveals much about the foundation and purpose for which the church was originally constituted as a separate denomination. It displays the roots which were being put down in the soil of the Reformed inheritance which came through the Scottish line.

DEVELOPMENT AND CONFIRMATION OF DISTINCTIVES

This newly formed denomination had three ordained ministers and three men who were acting as student pastors, so the important matter of training these men had to be dealt with.

Though separate denominations, the E.P.C. and the P.C.E.A. agreed on the joint setting up of a Theological College which they called the John Knox College. It was while these three students were at the college that the matter of the Free Offer of the Gospel arose. It was soon discovered that there were serious doctrinal differences between the officers of the E.P.C. and of the P.C.E.A. The E.P.C. officers, with their Arminian background, were deeply disturbed and offended by the P.C.E.A.'s concept for the basis of "the offer," which is an unfulfilled desire in the heart of God for the salvation of all men, and a universal non-saving love in God for the reprobate. The manner in which "the offer" was preached was to them a compromise of the doctrines of grace and of the Reformed faith.



Pastor Philip Burley

The E.P.C. folk had come, through many tears and much study, to the doctrines of grace and of the sovereignty of God, and they were not persuaded by the arguments of the ministers of the P.C.E.A.

Later in the controversy the P.C.E.A. men made reference to the "Marrow men" and held them up as an example as to how the Gospel should be preached to sinners. The language recommended was that "Christ is dead for YOU," "Christ is YOUR'S to come to," "the deed is made out in your name — YOU only have to take possession," "Christ hath taken upon him the sins of all men," "the Father hath made a deed of gift unto all mankind...."

All these expressions were indeed offensive to the E.P.C. folk. They certainly believed that the Gospel must be preached to all men, but the offer was to be in the sense of a publicizing or a setting forth of Christ as the only way to heaven, and of our desperate need of Him, and of the command given in God's Word that we are all bound to repent and believe on the Son of God. It was a lifting up of Christ for all to see, a setting forth of His sufficiency, and telling the hearers that unless they fled to Him from the wrath to come they would surely perish. To the E.P.C. folk the death and the atonement of Christ were for the elect alone.

So in this way the battle lines were drawn, and this distinctive of the E.P.C. as a church was established. Through much study the E.P.C. people came to see that they

were not alone in their stand. They found there were many who had gone before, who had held to their position such as Knox, Rutherford, Gillespie, Dickson, Durham, and men that followed them such as Professor Dunlop, Robert Wodrow, Thomas Blackwell, J. Willison, J. Brown of Wamphray, William Guthrie.

In the years that followed, the E.P.C. discovered that there were other denominations which had rejected the doctrine of the "marrow" and "common grace," and that they were not entirely alone in the world in their stand on this issue. They were greatly encouraged by this discovery.

There are a number of other areas which the E.P.C. would class as their distinctives. One is the matter of the Covenant and its implication in Christian education. On the one hand, we do not hold to presumptive regeneration; and, on the other, we do not treat our children as a mission field. The E.P.C. believe that covenant children are Christian in the sense that they are members of the visible church, and have all the outward privileges of the people of God. They are to be taught their responsibilities as those who are guilty of both original and actual sin.

There is also the matter of the Lordship of Christ, with its application to a Christian view of politics and the civil magistrate. The rulers of our land are in fact answerable to the Lord. They derive their authority from Him alone, and therefore are responsible to rule in the civil sphere according to His Holy Law.

Further, the matter of biblically regulated worship has been confirmed over the years. This principle requires a warrant from Scripture for every element of worship.

These distinctives have made it extremely difficult for the E.P.C. to forge a sister-church relationship with any other denomination. On the one hand we agree with Scottish Presbyterians in the matters of worship, church government, and the civil magistrate; but there is a great difficulty when it comes to the "marrow" theology; on the

other hand the E.P.C. has an affinity with the P.R.C. of America in the doctrine of particular grace, yet again there are the very real differences in matters of worship and government.

The E.P.C. sees that, by God's grace, it must maintain those truths which God in His goodness has revealed to her as a church. There must be no watering down of these doctrines in order to form any alliance with another denomination which would of necessity remove the blessing of God from the E.P.C. as a denomination.

THE E.P.C. IN ITS WORK AND WITNESS TODAY

In the Reformed world, the E.P.C. are theologically a very conservative and confessional church. They desire to safeguard and preserve their precious heritage in the Reformed faith for future generations. Apart from holding to those doctrines and practices which all Reformed churches hold, they remain distinctive as a denomination, in holding to sovereign particular grace, as founded on God's eternal covenant. Also, in applying the supreme Lordship of Christ to worship, they practice exclusive psalmody unaccompanied by music.

At present, the E.P.C. consist of five congregations, and two preaching stations. There are three pastors, or teaching elders, with approximately 350 souls under their pastoral care.

Since the recent separation of two congregations from our fellowship, we enjoy a measure of unity and purpose not previously enjoyed. We continue to maintain our synodical structure to help in the care of the congregations, which are separated by distances of up to 2,000 miles. We also have two young men as students in training for the ministry. We look upon these students as an answer to the prayers of the people, as our need for ministers is great. At our last Synod there was approval, on a limited basis, to take up the kind offer of help from the Protestant Reformed Churches in the training of our students.

To help settle and establish the work of our denomination further,

the E.P.C. are seeking to revise their practice and constitution, with a view to making it more workable and applicable to Australian circumstances, and, in some instances, more consistent with their understanding of God's Word. They are consulting the Orders and Practices of other Reformed Churches to assist them in this work.

Though the E.P.C. have had many trials and hardships, their continued existence is evidence of God's gracious work. Though they battle with their faults and shortcomings, they desire to continue faithfully serving the Lord, in "their corner of His vineyard."

They seek to bear witness to the full-orbed Reformed faith which is the most consistent expression of God's Word. They seek to do this without compromise, but with a compassionate understanding of the problems and the difficulties of others. They believe they need the brethren of other Reformed churches, in order to encourage and help one another in setting forth the Lord Jesus Christ, in all His beauty. They believe that the world lies in darkness, and needs this great light; therefore they are seeking to shine forth, to God's glory, and the ingathering of His lost sheep who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death.

At present, their resources do not enable them to support their own missionaries, but they are seeking to witness and evangelize those around them. They support various missionary endeavors, which include the Presbyterian Church in Uganda, the Reformation Translation Society in Taiwan, and the Trinitarian Bible Society. The E.P.C. is at present preparing a symposium on denominational distinctives, and is working toward more regular publishing of their magazine, *The Evangelical Presbyterian*, as well as other publications.

The E.P.C. believes that the Westminster Confessional standards, as approved and qualified by the Reformed Church of Scotland in 1647, are the most consistent summary of the truths of God's holy Word, and are in harmony with the continen-

tal Reformed symbols, such as the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, and the Canons of Dordt. They see these standards as part of their heritage. By the Westminster standards the E.P.C. mean: The Confession of Faith; the Larger and Shorter Catechisms; the Solemn League and Covenant; The

Directory for the Public Worship of God; the Form of Presbyterian Church Government and the Directory for Family Worship; and the First and Second Books of Discipline.

At present, the E.P.C. are seeking to continue their contact with other Reformed churches, and with indi-

viduals who hold the Reformed faith as precious. Their aim is to enter meaningful, face-to-face discussion with them. They desire to understand precisely where they agree and disagree with others, and thus to what extent they can work together, whilst maintaining their distinctives. □

The Promotion of More Meaningful Sister-Church Relationships

Rev. Rodney Miersma



Rev. Rodney Miersma in his own pulpit

In order to discuss how to promote a "more meaningful" sister-church relationship we must first come to an understanding as to what a "sister-church relationship" is. Then we can discuss what

Rev. Miersma is pastor of the Protestant Reformed Church of New Zealand, a sister-church to the Protestant Reformed Churches of America.

makes such relationship "meaningful" in order finally to establish how it can be made "more" meaningful.

Since the Protestant Reformed Churches of America seem to be the point of common contact, let us look at their definition of a sister-church relationship as set forth in the Constitution of their Committee for Contact with Other Churches (pp. 55-56, *Church Order*). Under "V. General Mandate: B." we read:

B. A full sister-church relationship with foreign churches implies:

1. Mutual acknowledgment of offices, so that ministers of sister churches are allowed preaching privileges in one another's congregations and are eligible to be called by congregations in sister churches.
2. Mutual acknowledgment of membership attests.
3. The delegation and reception of delegates to the broadest assemblies of such sister churches.

4. Taking heed to one another's life as churches; constantly acquainting one another with decisions of their broadest assemblies; mutual decisions as to revisions of and additions to the creeds, the Church Order, and liturgical forms.

Such a full sister-church relation shall be established only with those foreign churches of whom we are assured not only that they accept the Reformed standards as their basis, but that they indeed maintain them in their ecclesiastical life.

The underlying principles for the above can be found in the Holy Scriptures and in the subordinate standards of the PRCA, the specific references being the Heidelberg Catechism, Q & A 54; the Belgic Confession of Faith, Articles 27-29; and the Church Order of the PRCA, Article 85 (cf. "IV" of the above mentioned Constitution). Although specific Scriptural references are not given, the Reformed



Home and foreign participants



Rev. and Mrs. Lau, slide presentation on Singapore



Committee members record the speeches



Rev. Coleborn poses a question



Mr. Callender as precentor, for a Psalter number without organ



P.R. clergy in good attendance



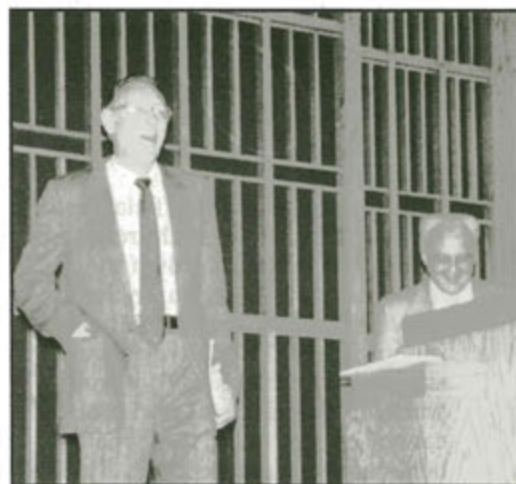
left to right: USA, NZ, UK



Two cultures, one goal: missions



The Mahtanis and Korterings share a table



Profs Hanko and Decker enjoy a light moment



Taking good advantage of coffee/cookie time



Churches in the Netherlands, Liberated, when speaking on this same subject, give John 17:11, 17, 20, 21; Ephesians 3:14-4:6; and II Timothy 3:15, 16 as references.

Having established what a sister-church relationship is, we now approach the question, "What makes this relationship not only 'meaningful,' but 'more' meaningful?" The answer to this question can be as many and as varied as there are churches involved, and even as many and as varied as there are individuals within each church. In other words, the answer is highly subjective rather than objective.

I believe that there are two levels of sister-church relationships. One level is the official level, where contact is made and maintained officially through the broadest assemblies. The other level is an unofficial level through the members of the churches as they personally live out what has been established on the official level.

Beginning with the official level, relationships between churches can be truly meaningful only if the mandate, such as set out in the above constitution, is actually put into practice. It has always been stressed from the pulpits of true churches that doctrine and practice cannot be separated, that what one believes must also be lived. Therefore, we must always guard against dead orthodoxy. This also applies here. All the constitutions with their mandates, rules, guidelines, etc. amount to nothing if they are not acted upon. This struck me as I studied the history of some churches in their contact with other churches. Contact would be made, and a sister-church relationship would be subsequently established... but it would not last. The relationship was inactive and therefore really dead. The churches involved, recognizing this, would then officially terminate the relationship, even though confessionally they could and should have remained "sisters."

There must therefore constantly be communication so that we come to know one another more and more intimately. It is then that we will discover not only that we are so very much alike, but that we need each other. Too often a church has been in isolation for so long, rather independent, fighting her own battles, that when she finds a "sister" she assumes that she can only give and can be enriched in no way by her new "sister." Few things are more demeaning than getting the feeling that one can only be enriched by another, but can not contribute anything of worth in return. The body of Christ is one, all the members of it are dependent on each other for the welfare of the whole. As this is true in the physical body, so is this true in the spiritual body as this applies to the individual congregations and denominations which are visible manifestations of that spiritual body.

Eventually it all comes down to this: If sister-church relationships are to be meaningful, then the contact should be active, living, and intimate. Then the churches will be working together in their highest and, really, only calling, that is, the preaching of the gospel unto all the world unto the gathering of God's people from every nation, tongue, and tribe. Practically this is done in the way of meeting the needs of our sisters to the best of our ability according as the Lord has blessed us. This may be in the sharing of ministers, educating men from a sister-church for the ministry, co-laboring in missions, exchanging literature for mutual edification, offering advice when it is requested, or simply lending an ear. At times it may also mean monetary assistance in order that our sister may have the blessing of having her own minister of the gospel. Anything less would be a denial of a meaningful sister-church relationship. One of the greatest and most important helps is "ministers preaching." In short, a sister-church relationship without the privilege of being able to call a minister from the sister-church would be a denial of one of the

most important parts of a sister-church relationship. This brings us back to the putting into action what was expressed in word, without reservation, with complete and wholehearted commitment.

Turning now to the relationship on the unofficial level, we can be relatively brief. A good, healthy, living relationship at the official level will result in a similar relationship developing at the unofficial level. By the latter is meant contact between members of sister-churches as families and as individuals, which contact has no legal standing. When two churches are working harmoniously together, then the saints of each will seek each other out. Personal visits should be encouraged. In New Zealand we can speak from experience. Situated on the other side of the world from our "sister" we are filled with joy when fellow-saints from our sister-church come to visit us. Here the intimacy is brought out which is almost impossible at the official level. In addition, there could be a regular exchange of news, whether by way of a "newsletter" or the church bulletins. In New Zealand, when a newsletter such as Hudsonville's "A Closer Look" is received, or when a bulletin from First PRC is slipped in with our shipment of *Standard Bearers*, it is passed from family to family and read with great delight. We begin to feel the heartbeat of our sister-churches. The children and the young people could write to "pen pals." The exchange of church directories would also promote closer ties, whether this is done at the official or unofficial level. Each church could appoint a member of their congregation to send out bulletins and the like on a monthly basis similar to what is done for *The Standard Bearer* and *The Beacon Lights*. The various churches through their Evangelism Committees could keep sister-churches informed of all available material, particularly tapes of lectures and pamphlets, all of which are extremely helpful in evangelism work and for the edification of the members themselves. The more contact there is unoffi-

cially the more meaningful is the relationship officially. Thus, there is a reciprocal relationship between the two levels, for the same thing is true in reverse.

Meaningful relationships produce meaningful fruits. In these latter days which are characterized by rampant apostasy and increasing evil, when one feels more and more like Elijah in thinking that we are all alone, it is encouraging to learn that one is not alone. We then go about our work with renewed vigor and strength, the feelings of

loneliness and isolation being cast away. As we learn from each other we grow in grace, truth, and knowledge. What before we were not able to accomplish by ourselves we can now do with the help of our sister.

There are also things that can take away from a good relationship. Fears have been expressed such as the danger of compromise and suspicion, division among one's own for the sake of a relationship with another, and the spending of time with a sister-church to

the neglect of one's own church.

In light of the preceding it is incumbent upon all of us as churches and as individuals to deal with one another with patience and with charity, all the while respecting each other's convictions.

We pray that some of the ideas expressed in this article may help to stimulate ever more meaningful relationships with our sister-churches and with others with whom we have contact, that our covenant God and Father may receive all honor and glory. □

Report of Classis East

Mr. Jon Huiskens

Classis East met in regular session on Wednesday, May 9, 1990 with a continued session on May 30, 1990. The continued session was necessary to give a committee of pre-advice sufficient time to study the material given them. Rev. B. Woudenberg chaired the session of May 9th and Rev. W. Bruinsma the session of May 30th.

Several matters of import occupied the agenda of classis: the report of the special committee of classis to visit Norristown and several appeals from members of two of the congregations in Classis

East. Since some of this material was treated in closed session, reporting will be limited to those aspects of the appeals that were in open session.

Two of the appeals dealt with the application of Article 31 of the Church Order, specifically whether matters could be preached about which were in the process of being appealed to synod. Classis decided not to sustain the appellants in this matter, citing the fact that classis had already decided twice in the matter and a previous decision of Classis West in 1981 which dealt with the similar question involving Article 31.

The committee report regarding Norristown dealt with Norristown's use of their own songbook, Norristown's practice of not using musical accompaniment, Norristown's previous practice of having elders deliver their own sermons, and Norristown's use of creeds other than the Heidelberg Catechism as texts for preaching. Classis advised Norristown to return to the use of *The Psalter*, to bring to completion its study of musical ac-

companiment by January, 1991, and to cease from the practice of using other creeds for sermon texts. Classis expressed its thanks to Norristown for the cessation of elders delivering their own sermons.

Byron Center overtured the classis regarding the time of submission of material to be treated by classis, asking that the three-week deadline prior to a meeting of classis for material to be submitted for inclusion in the agenda be changed to thirty days, thus allowing more time for the publishing and sending of the agenda to the consistories. Classis adopted this overture. This means that material for the meeting of September 12, 1990 must be in the hands of the Stated Clerk by August 13, 1990.

Expenses of classis (for both sessions) amounted to \$5,673.17. Classis will meet next on September 12, 1990 at Hudsonville. □

Respectfully submitted,
Jon J. Huiskens
Stated Clerk

Mr. Huiskens is an elder in the Protestant Reformed Church of Grandville, Michigan.

Book Review

THE SEED OF THE WOMAN, by Arthur C. Custance, 580 pp. Available from Doorway Publishers, Box 291, Brockville, Ontario K6V 5V5. (Reviewed by Rev. George C. Lubbers.)

Here is a book which is written in a rather clear style and in a clear vocabulary. This book appeals to a critical and attentive reader who is willing to do just a bit of critical thinking. The book delves into the field both of biblical exegesis and of Nicean theology. We recommend this book to the observant reader.

The title of this book is obviously derived from Genesis 3:16. This would lead the student of Scripture to expect some positive exegetical interpretation both of the seed of the Serpent and of the seed of the Woman in their battle throughout the ages. However, the writer limits his perspective and observations to the seed of the woman, and narrows this down simply to the conception of Jesus in the womb of Mary, a real woman. That she was a Virgin is not discussed. Rather the author attempts to show that the uniqueness of the *germ plasm* in Eve's body differed from the *sperm* in Adam's body in that it was not affected by the poison of physical death. Eve, therefore, had something immortal in her germ plasm which Adam did not retain as man.

How this affected the birth of Christ from a "woman" without the assistance of a man remains rather nebulous in this book. In the judgment of this reviewer this comes as no surprise. The incarnation of the eternal Son under the overshadowing power and protection of the Holy Spirit is and will ever remain the Mystery of all mysteries. In spite of all the scientific research and the vast encyclopedic

grasp of the author, the simple birth of one child will ever remain as confessed in humble amazement by the Psalmist in Psalm 139:13, 14: "For thou didst form my inward parts (reins): thou didst cover me in my mother's womb (knit me together). I will praise thee for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.... My frame was not hid from thee when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth." If this is true of the conception and birth of every human mortal, that it is shrouded in secrecy, how much more the birth of the eternal WORD made flesh!

Should anyone desire to read more in detail and in depth this rather learned book which is studied with scientific, experimental data, we urge him to procure this book at the above-given address.

There is also an interesting and instructive part of the book which deals with the age-old question of Dichotomism versus Trichotomism. The author here attempts to solve this mystery of whether man consists of two parts or of three parts (body and soul, versus body, soul, and spirit) from Genesis 2:7: "And JEHOVAH God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."

In my Seminary instruction some sixty years ago, Prof. Herman Hoeksema pointed out that we should not overlook that the text says that Jehovah formed MAN from the dust of the ground. He did something more: He also breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, so that man became a *living soul*!

Man was made such that in this creation he is spiritual soul, image of God. He was not a mere forma-

tion of clay, or an addition of soul, body, and spirit. Man had a spiritual soul as well as a physical soul. It was not so that out of the body and soul of man there emerged personality.

The author attempts to demonstrate the fusion of body and spirit into a living soul by placing two stained pieces of glass, colors blue and yellow, upon each other to obtain the color green. It is thus in the color green that we have an illustration of man being made a living soul. When I read this there came to mind what I had read in the late Dr. Abraham Kuyper's *Dictaten Dogmatiek, Locus de Homini*, page 24, where he denominates this type of Trichotomy as being Pantheistic. He dictated to his Seminary, "All the proponents of Trichotomy admit that there are not three essential parts, but only two created parts, but that a third entity emerged from these two." According to Kuyper this is unbiblical teaching.

In the candid judgment of this reviewer the weakness of this well-written volume is the lack of careful exegesis.

We heartily recommend this thought-provoking book to all professors, teachers, and other thoughtful, discerning readers. □

News From Our Churches

Mr. Benjamin Wigger

MINISTERIAL CALLS

Both Rev. Richard Flikkema and Rev. Barrett Gritters have declined their calls to serve as the pastors of the Hope PRC in Isabel, SD and Randolph PRC in Randolph, WI, respectively.

MISSION ACTIVITIES

In late April, the Council of the Hope PRC in Redlands, CA sent their pastor, Rev. A. denHartog, along with elder Everett VanVoorthuysen, to Santa Cruz, CA, a city about 350 miles north of Redlands, to meet with four families there who had requested that Redlands visit with them concerning the possibility of mission work in their area.

These men met with this group of four young couples and reported to their congregation that these families are very zealous for the faith that God has given to us in our churches. Pray for this group as they discuss with Redlands what the will of the Lord may be for future work in Santa Cruz.

CONGREGATIONAL ACTIVITIES

We are happy to report here that the congregation of the Lynden PRC in Lynden, WA has adopted a proposal from their Consistory to award the contract bid to build their new church building. Construction is scheduled to begin sometime this summer, D.V.

The Evangelism Society of the Southeast PRC in Grand Rapids, MI sponsored a lecture at the Calvin Fine Arts Center on May 10. Southeast's pastor, Rev. Steve Key, spoke on the topic "Church Membership in an Evil Age."

The congregation of the Grandville PRC in Grandville, MI cordially invited everyone in the West Michigan area PR churches to their open house on May 21.

There was a special Bible Study held at the South Holland PRC in South Holland, IL recently. The Adult Bible Study groups from Bethel, Peace, and South Holland met in a combined society meeting to conclude their society year. The Bible study was on Mark 6:30-56, with fellowship and refreshments afterwards.

DENOMINATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

The faculty of our Seminary is thankful to God and pleased to announce that Seminarian Mitch Dick has been licensed to "speak a word of edification" in the churches. According to our Church Order, the purpose of having seminarians preach in the churches is twofold: 1) "for their own training" and 2) "for the sake of becoming known to the churches."

Mitch Dick will get his first opportunity to do just that in Lynden, WA where he is scheduled to

preach June 10, 17, and 24, D.V.

I did a little research and discovered that the last time the seminary granted a license to "speak a word of edification" to any seminary student was in 1985.

SCHOOL NEWS

On May 29 the fourteenth Annual Spring Combined Protestant Reformed Christian Schools Band Concert was held at the Calvin College Fine Arts Center in Grand Rapids, MI. Under the direction of Mr. Andrew Kamper, bands from Adams, Heritage, Hope, and Covenant performed individual numbers. Then the stage was rearranged and all 130 musicians combined to play several numbers under the direction of guest conductor, Mr. David E. Smith.

I, for one, was especially impressed by these young people and the talent they showed. It reminded one of Psalm 33:3b: "play skilfully with a loud noise."

The School Board of Heritage Christian School in Hudsonville, MI presented a proposal to its society members in late April to build a junior high addition to the school. Tentative approval was given, depending on the outcome of a financial drive in June of this year. This addition, which would be the second for Heritage since 1985, would consist of four regular classrooms, a band-choir room, and a Special Education room. Presently Heritage has 14 classrooms and two portable classrooms, but a study committee projects the need for an 18-room school by 1992. □

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

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Mary Martha Society of the Hope Protestant Reformed Church of Redlands, California expresses its sincere sympathy to Mr. and Mrs. Jim Bleyenbergh and family in the death of her father, MR. RALPH BRUMMEL.

May they be sustained by God's grace and comforted in His Word: "Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory" (Ps. 73:24).

Rev. Arie den Hartog, President
Anna Mae Bodbyl, Secretary

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Martha Ladies Aid Society of the Hull Protestant Reformed Church expresses its sincere sympathy to Mrs. Peter D. Westra and family in the loss of her sister, ELLEN DICK.

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

Rev. Richard Moore, President
Marie Brummel, Secretary

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

On April 26, 1990, the Lord took to glory the mother of a beloved member of our congregation, MRS. SARAH KEY.

The congregation extends their heartfelt sympathy to her family, but especially to her daughter, Mrs. Mary Hanko. "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" (1 Cor. 2:9).

M.A.R. VanBrakel, Vice-President
Richard Martin, Clerk Norristown, PA

NOTICE!!!

Classis West of the Protestant Reformed Churches will meet in South Holland, Illinois, on Wednesday, September 5, 1990, at 8:30 AM, the Lord willing. All material for the Agenda is to be in the hands of the Stated Clerk, 30 days before Classis convenes. All delegates in need of lodging or transportation from the airport should notify the Clerk of South Holland's Consistory using the forms provided for that purpose.

Rev. R. Hanko, Stated Clerk

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

On April 14, 1990, the Lord took to His eternal rest the father of a beloved member of our congregation, MR. LOLKE T. WIETSMA.

The congregation extends their support and sympathy to his family, but especially to his daughter, Mrs. Hissy VanBrakel. "For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God" (Job 19:25, 26).

K. Hanko, President
Richard Martin, Clerk Norristown, PA

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On July 11, 1990, the Lord willing, our dear parents and grandparents FRED and ALBERTA BOUWKAMP will celebrate their 50th Wedding Anniversary.

We, their children and grandchildren, rejoice with them. We are thankful to our heavenly Father for God-fearing parents and may He continue to bless them in the years to come.

Judy & Frank Triezenberg
Fred & Joann Bouwkamp
Dave & Char Bouwkamp
9 grandchildren
First Church, Grand Rapids, Michigan

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On June 22, 1990 our parents and grandparents MR. & MRS. HERMAN VANDYKE celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary. This is a happy occasion for our family because we know that godly parents are a priceless gift from our heavenly Father and for this we are grateful. We, their children and grandchildren commend them to the care of our Lord in the days ahead.

"The lines are fallen unto me in places large and fair. A goodly heritage is mine, Marked out with gracious care" *The Psalter* #27:5.

John & Judy VanDyke
Gary & Cris VanDyke
Donald & Linda VanDyke
Steve & Pat VanDyke
Alan & Sandy VanDyke
Timothy & Linda VanDyke
Kathy VanDyke & Tim Decker
17 grandchildren

Hope, Walker, Michigan

LYNDEN P.R. CHURCH

The Lynden Protestant Reformed Church of Lynden, Washington is offering up to \$330,000 in notes to finance the construction of our sanctuary. (5-years: 8%; 10-years: 8.5%)

These notes will be issued in multiples of \$1,000, payable on demand with interest paid semi-annually.

For further information, please call or write:

Albert deBoer
1633 Matz Road
Ferndale, WA 98248
(208) 384-4148.

We ask that you give this your prayerful consideration.