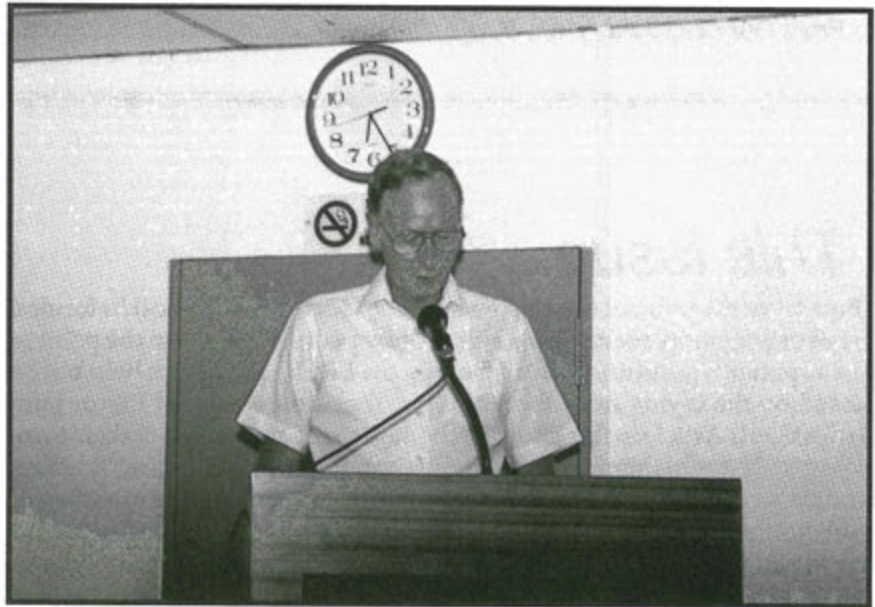


# *THE* **STANDARD BEARER**

**A Reformed  
Semi-Monthly  
Magazine**

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PRC pastor, Rev. Jason Kortering,  
addresses Singaporean audience

**“Opportunities for labor in this part of the world,  
and especially here in Singapore and the ERCS, are  
staggering.”**

See “Reflections on the Training of Our Future Ministers”  
— page 275.

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*Vol. 68, No. 12  
March 15, 1992*

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## In This Issue...

Both from the point of view of the labors *within* the Evangelical Reformed Churches of Singapore themselves, and, more especially still, from the point of view of apparent opportunities for labors *by* the ERCS, one cannot help but be impressed by the crying need for laborers. That's the thrust of Pastor Jaik Mahtani's Guest Article in this issue. In the absence of a seminary of their own, according to Pastor Mahtani, the ERCS have appointed a Theological Training Committee to explore opportunities for, and to supervise, the training of aspirants to the ministry, both at a local Bible College and in the Protestant Reformed Seminary in the U.S. However, he leaves no doubt but that what he calls "the need of the hour" requires serious pursuit of the longer-term goal of establishing their own seminary in Singapore. It is especially for that that he urges the friends of the ERCS to heed Christ's command to "pray the Lord of the harvest...."

\* \* \* \* \*

At the beginning of this volume year we informed our readers that Rev. Steven Key would share with Rev. Dykstra the rubric, "The Strength of Youth." In this issue we have the first of what we hope will be a good number of articles from Rev. Key's pen. His topic this time, "Mind Games," is addressed to the youth of the church; but it's a matter, surely, which concerns every child of God. Having himself once studied marketing, Rev. Key can speak with some authority about the ad industry's determined effort to manipulate people's minds through hidden persuaders, the stated purpose of which is to bypass their conscious guard. That is, con them into buying the meat for its sizzle. Now, if such psychological manipulation were limited to the marketing of goods, its threat to the spiritual well-being of the child of God would not be so serious. But, says Rev. Key, it isn't. It involves more than meat. And it involves not only public-relations experts but the master deceiver himself. But ... read for yourself — "Mind Games."

D.D.

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#### EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

Editor: Prof. David J. Engelsma  
Secretary: Prof. Robert D. Decker  
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#### EDITORIAL OFFICE

The Standard Bearer  
4949 Ivanrest  
Grandville, MI 49418  
BUSINESS OFFICE  
The Standard Bearer  
Don Doezeema  
P.O. Box 603  
Grandville, MI  
49468-0603

PH: (616) 538-1778  
(616) 531-1490

FAX: (616) 531-3033

#### CHURCH NEWS EDITOR

Mr. Ben Wigger  
6597 40th Ave.  
Hudsonville, MI 49426  
NEW ZEALAND OFFICE  
The Standard Bearer  
c/o Protestant Reformed  
Church  
B. VanHerik  
66 Fraser St.  
Wainuiomata, New Zealand

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## Meditation

Rev. James Slopsema

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# A Prayer for God's Mercy

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*Let thy tender mercies come unto me, that I may live: for thy law is my delight.*

Psalm 119:77

We do not know who the inspired writer of this Psalm was.

From the Psalm itself, however, we learn a great deal about him. He was a young man who was being persecuted for his faith. For his faith he had even been imprisoned by the princes of the land. The prospect of a martyr's death was very real.

In this Psalm the psalmist speaks of the law of God. He refers to God's law by several different terms. The psalmist speaks of God's word, His ways, His statutes, His commandments, His judgments, His testimonies, His precepts. One of these terms is found in each of the 176 verses of this Psalm, with only two exceptions. It is clear from this Psalm that God's law served the psalmist as his guide, his joy, and his strength.

In the particular verse we consider for this meditation the psalmist utters a prayer: "Let thy tender mercies come unto me, that I may live: for thy law is my delight."

How urgent was this prayer for the psalmist!

How urgent this prayer is for us!

\* \* \* \* \*

Let thy tender mercies come unto me!

How beautiful and precious are the tender mercies of God.

God's tender mercy is the pity and compassion God has for His people in their need. Whenever God sees the suffering of His people, His divine heart goes out to them. He is deeply affected by their plight. This inner compassion and concern for His people led God to reach out to His people in their woes and to deliver them.

When the psalmist speaks of God's tender mercies (plural), he has in mind specific acts of mercy in which God delivers His people from their troubles.

The psalmist utters a prayer, Let thy tender mercies come unto me. The psalmist is in deep distress. He has need of help. His request is that the Lord in compassion deliver him mightily from his troubles.

Notice, too, that the psalmist asks for God's mercy specifically so that he may live.

Certainly the psalmist was concerned here about his physical life. Remember, the psalmist had been imprisoned by the princes of the land for his faith. He faced the very real prospect that he, like countless others in history, would be martyred for the faith. When, therefore, he prays for God's tender mercies that he may live, he undoubtedly is concerned with his physical life.

Nevertheless, it becomes apparent from the Psalm itself that the psalmist's concern was primarily with his spiritual life.

The psalmist gives indication that his imprisonment was the cause

of great struggle of soul. Due to the difficult circumstances in which he found himself, the psalmist's soul melted for heaviness (vs. 28). It clung to the dust (vs. 25). Consequently, the psalmist speaks repeatedly of his need to be comforted. He also repeats the request over and over that the Lord quicken him, i.e., make him alive.

All this makes clear that the psalmist was very concerned about his spiritual existence. As a child of God he enjoyed a rich life of friendship and fellowship with God. That life, however, was being disrupted, even threatened, by his persecution. The devil was working mightily to bring the psalmist to despair, to crush his soul. Very real were the temptations to turn from God that he may win the favor of his persecutors.

---

*Whenever we  
in God's providence  
suffer due to sickness,  
poverty, the loss of a  
loved one in death,  
family problems,  
or any other means,  
the devil is busily working.*

---

In great agony of soul the psalmist cries out to God, Let thy tender mercies come unto me, that I may live!

This urgent prayer for tender mercy must also be ours. For we are essentially in the same plight as the psalmist.

It is true that our physical circumstances are not the same as the

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



psalmist's. I doubt that anyone reading these words has been imprisoned for his faith, or faces the real prospect of martyrdom.

Nevertheless, the powers of darkness also seek to disrupt and, if possible, destroy the wonderful life of friendship and fellowship we enjoy with God in Jesus Christ. The powers of darkness seek to accomplish this fiendish purpose, for example, by dangling before us the pleasures of a sinful world, hoping to allure us away from God into sin. But the devil also uses hardship and suffering in his attempt to destroy us spiritually. Whenever we in God's providence suffer due to sickness, poverty, the loss of a loved one in death, family problems, or any other means, the devil is busily working. He seeks to bring us to despair. He would make us bitter, even rebellious against God. He tries every which way to use our suffering to disrupt our life with God, to turn us from God and destroy us spiritually.

Consequently we find ourselves in a continual battle for our very spiritual life. In this battle it is very important that we cry out as the psalmist, Let thy tender mercies come unto me, that I may live.

\* \* \* \* \*

The psalmist grounds his prayer for divine mercy in his delight in God's law: Let thy tender mercies come unto me, that I may live: for thy law is my delight.

When we think of God's law, we usually think just of the Ten Commandments. To the psalmist the law meant more than just the ten words written by God on tables of stone. To the psalmist the law included all the precepts given to Israel at Mt. Sinai through Moses. In addition to the Ten Commandments, which formed the heart of the law, were the ceremonial laws. These laws governed Israel's worship. They instructed Israel to erect the tabernacle, ordain the priesthood, offer various sacrifices, and keep the feast days. In addition to this there were also the civil laws, laws which organized Israel into a nation in the land of Canaan.

These laws were very significant for Old Testament Israel. For they proclaimed to Israel the gospel of salvation. The ceremonial laws, for example, provided Israel with a picture of the coming Savior, who as the Lamb of God would offer Himself as atonement for their sins and obtain their salvation. The kingdom into which Israel was organized through the civil laws provided God's people with a picture of the future kingdom of heaven in which they would enjoy the fullness of their salvation. In short, the whole gospel of salvation was pictured and powerfully proclaimed through the law.

In that law the psalmist delighted. The law was to the psalmist the source of great pleasure and joy. This delight of the psalmist was a delight in the gospel of grace which the law proclaimed to him.

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*We must be ready  
to set before the Lord  
the fruit of our faith  
as we seek His mercies.*

---

In this delight the psalmist grounds his prayer for mercy: Let thy tender mercies come unto me, that I may live: for thy law is my delight.

We must not understand the psalmist to be presenting his delight in the law as a good work that serves as a basis for God's mercy to him. God's mercies are not something we earn on the basis of our own works or worth. The mercies of God are freely given. They are given on one basis alone—the shed blood of atonement. Hence, we rule out any notion that the inspired psalmist bases his plea for mercy on his delight in God's law.

Rather does the psalmist set forth his delight in God's law as the evidence of his faith. The mercies of God are received by faith alone.

Now faith has certain fruits, one of which is an inner delight in God's law. Those who live by faith cling daily to the blood of atonement and

find in it all their salvation. For that reason the true believer also delights in the blood of atonement. It is the sure foundation of all that is precious to him. For the psalmist this atoning blood was represented in and promised by the sacrifices that the law required. The law proclaimed to him the gospel of salvation. Consequently, his delight was in that law.

And now, in his plea for God's tender mercies, the psalmist sets before the Lord his delight in God's law. For this delight is the proof of the very faith through which he expects to receive the mercies of God.

So too must we be ready to set before the Lord the fruit of our faith as we seek His mercies. That evidence is an inner delight, not just in the Old Testament law, but in the whole of God's Word that reveals to us Jesus Christ as the Lamb of God, come to take away the sin of the world.

\* \* \* \* \*

Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For everyone that asks receives; and he that seeks finds; and to him that knocks it shall be opened.

This truth about prayer spoken by Jesus (Matt. 7:7, 8) the psalmist found to be true also for himself. For, in answer to his plea, the Lord in mercy preserved the psalmist's life. The psalmist testifies that in the face of all obstacles he was able to persevere in the ways of God. He was also able to enjoy the pleasures of God's friendship and fellowship. In fact, the psalmist even testifies that his affliction had been for his profit. Before his troubles he was inclined to wander. But through affliction God taught him to keep the statutes of God.

Having seen the great mercy of God for the psalmist, let us also come before the Lord with the confidence of faith in the time of need.

And may our prayer be that of the psalmist.

Let thy tender mercies come unto me, that I may live: for thy law is my delight. □



The profane poet recommended seeing ourselves as others see us.

*O wad some Power the giftie gie us  
To see oursels as ithers see us!*

Even if we do not share the poet's enthusiasm for the supposed benefit of seeing "oursels as ithers see us" ("It wad frae monie a blunder free us, An' foolish notion"), we are interested in knowing how others see us.

A recent issue of the Dutch paper, *Nederlands Dagblad*, featured the Protestant Reformed Churches in its section on "religion." The bold heading reads, "Closed Protestant Reformed Churches Observer at Interchurch Council." The reference is to the decision of our 1990 synod to send an observer to the annual meeting of the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council (NAPARC).

*Nederlands Dagblad* is a daily newspaper with wide circulation throughout The Netherlands. It attempts to give a Reformed viewpoint on current events and contemporary issues. The influence of the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands ("Liberated") is dominant.

By the article in this paper, the PRC receive widespread publicity in The Netherlands.

This makes all the more regrettable the errors of fact that appear in the article. The ways of the "Liberated" emigrants and the PRC did not part in the 1950s "when it appeared that Hoeksema taught presupposed regeneration." But the "Liberated" went their own way when it appeared that the PRC would continue to teach the doctrine of the unconditional covenant of grace that they had always

taught. Nor did the schism that ripped the PRC in 1953 originate in Rev. Hubert DeWolf's denial of presupposed regeneration. Rather, the schism had its origin in Rev. DeWolf's denial of an unconditional covenant promise.

It is a matter of common knowledge and public record that Rev. Herman Hoeksema and the PRC have always expressly condemned and sharply repudiated the teaching of presupposed regeneration.

Still, we are interested to see how "ithers see us," especially among the Reformed in The Netherlands. Therefore, I publish for the benefit of the readers of the *Standard Bearer* the article that appeared in *Nederlands Dagblad* (7/17/91). It will be evident that the article is based in part on an interview with the editor of the *SB*, conducted by long-distance telephone. It will also be evident that certain analyses of the PRC and of their position in the Reformed community are those of the paper itself, or its correspondent.

Here follows the article, without further comment on my part. I give the article in its entirety. The translation from the Dutch is mine.

### Closed Protestant Reformed Churches Observer at Interchurch Council

"After years of traditional aloofness, the synod of the doctrinally orthodox PRC (6,000 members) has decided to delegate an observer to the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council. A striking development, since this denomination is known for its critical distancing itself from other Calvinistic churches, es-

pecially the Christian Reformed Church (CRC).

"The church split off in 1924 from the CRC in a conflict in which Rev. Herman Hoeksema played an important role. Immediately after the war, the (Liberated) Reformed emigrants joined especially this denomination. This came to an end when around 1950 their own Canadian Reformed Churches were established.

"The PRC came into existence after Rev. Hoeksema had criticized the Kuyperian doctrine of common grace and, therefore, was suspended and deposed. A few preachers and a few thousand church members were not in agreement with this and proceeded to institute the (PR) church.

"That after World War II many 'Liberated' emigrants entered this particular church was connected with the contacts between Rev. Hoeksema and Prof. Dr. K. Schilder, who was also a critic of certain Kuyperian conceptions. But the ways of these emigrants and the Protestant Reformed separated when it appeared that Hoeksema taught presupposed regeneration.

"On account of this doctrine this denomination went through a split in 1953. Rev. DeWolf of Grand Rapids began to deny presupposed regeneration. Two thirds of the confessing members followed Rev. DeWolf and left the denomination in order later again to join the CRC.

"Since then the PRC are known as a solid ecclesiastical fellowship with a strong uniformity in doctrine and life. One who adheres to the Kuyperian doctrine of common grace would be able to become a member only with difficulty. Also a community morality is maintained, such as



the denial of membership to labor union members. As a result, this denomination has many independent business men as members. The members contribute heavily on behalf of Christian education. Parents send their children preferably to a Reformed school approved by the consistory. The average church member likes to read and is theologically well-informed.

"The 1440 families, distributed among 27 congregations, support 25 ministers, 3 professors, a seminary in Grand Rapids, 6 emeriti ministers, a publishing house, and a theological magazine of quality, the *Standard Bearer*.

"The theological influence of this rather isolated denomination of churches reaches further than might be expected on the basis of the number of members. The systematic theology written by Rev. Hoeksema has influence as a standard work for the whole of Reformed America. And

the periodical, the *Standard Bearer*, has more subscribers outside the PRC than within.

"Their own theological seminary could recently again produce a candidate for the first time in five years, who is now eligible for call. The number of students at present is five, but it is anticipated that the number of applications will increase. Prof. David Engelsma calls this an answer to prayer: 'We have more than enough work. The PRC have three mission fields — Florida, Northern Ireland, and Jamaica — which really have no missionaries. If we receive more ministers, our churches will surely grow still more.'

"Mission work has also been done in Singapore (Evangelical Reformed Church). And conversations are going on with the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Australia. Two theological students from this Australian church study at the seminary in Grand Rapids.

"The PRC, meanwhile, does not any longer seek her strength in criticizing the CRC and, related to this, summoning members to break with the denomination. The younger generation has other interests than always to be concentrating on the CRC.

"Now that the CRC approaches a split, Prof. Engelsma does not expect this will result in much gain for his churches. That has to do with the relationship between conservative CRC members and the PRC, which has always been entirely negative. 'I see no role for the PRC in the present problems in the CRC,' declares Engelsma.

"The Protestant Reformed anticipate more recruiting strength from their solid ecclesiastical fellowship and sharply defined theological position. With the present 6,000 members, the number of members has again been reached that the churches had just before the split of 1953."

— DJE

## Family Conference in Northern Ireland

From the British Reformed Fellowship (BRF), a group committed to the promotion of the Reformed faith in the British Isles, we have received a request to publicize in the *Standard Bearer* a family conference scheduled for this summer. This we gladly do, both because we are pleased to cooperate with the promotion of the Reformed faith everywhere in the world and because the conference in Northern Ireland is connected with the Protestant Reformed mission in Northern Ireland, the Covenant Reformed Fellowship.

The following information about the conference is drawn from materials provided by the BRF.

In cooperation with Covenant Reformed Fellowship, the BRF has organized a week-long family holiday conference in August of this year. The dates are Saturday, August 15 - Saturday, August 22. The conference will be held at "Stricklands," a lovely, spacious conference center overlooking Belfast Lough (an inlet of the Irish Sea) in Bangor, County Down, Northern Ireland. The large, stately conference center can accommodate up to 70 people with comfortable rooms having 2, 3, and 4 beds and with mattresses available for young children. In addition, the nearby town of Bangor, a holiday resort, is well equipped with ample hotel and bed-

and-breakfast facilities.

The cost for those who attend has been kept to a minimum. Guests are being charged for meals and accommodation only. For a week's meals and lodging, prices range from 65 pounds for an adult (about \$130) to 15 pounds for a child under 5 (about \$30 dollars). A free-will offering will be taken during the week to help with conference and other expenses.

The theme of the conference is "The Covenant of Grace." An attractive brochure put out by the BRF to advertise the conference states that "the covenant of grace is a theme of increasing interest at the present time. That God has bound Himself by cov-



enant to His people (and their children) in all ages of the church is a truth of profound importance and one on which the Christian believer can completely and confidently rest his faith. The Protestant Reformed Churches in America place great emphasis on the covenant of grace ...."

The speakers at the conference will be Professors Herman Hanko and David Engelsma of the Protestant Reformed Seminary.

Meetings will be held each evening and on some mornings. Two worship services will be held on the Lord's Day under the auspices of the Protestant Reformed mission in Northern Ireland.

Although the teaching of the Word of God will be central, the "programme" of the conference assures us that the conference will be of a relaxed nature and adequate time will be available for recreation with family and friends. All afternoons will be free. Two full-day coach tours are planned, one to the North Antrim Coast and the Giant's Causeway and

the other to Downpatrick, Newcastle, and the Mourne Mountains. Half-day excursions will also be arranged to local places of interest.

The BRF is inviting readers of the *SB* in the United States and Canada to attend this conference. The Fellowship is hopeful that a number of Protestant Reformed people in particular but others also who have an interest in the covenant of grace will make this conference their vacation this summer. It has, therefore, arranged that two men in the States will serve to give further information to interested persons, as well as to coordinate possible travel to Northern Ireland as a group. Brochures and further details about the conference, including the possibility of traveling as a group, can be obtained from

Mr. Bill Oomkes  
6299 Wing Ave. SE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49512  
(telephone: 616-698-6697).

For general information about Northern Ireland and the rest of the United Kingdom, interested persons should get in touch with

Rev. Gise VanBaren  
5101 Beechtree Ave.  
Hudsonville, MI 49426  
(telephone: 616-669-5380).

I take the liberty to extend the invitation still more widely. Readers of the *SB* everywhere in the world — the British Isles, The Netherlands, France, Singapore, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and other places — are invited to attend this conference. What a fine thing that lovers of the Reformed faith should come together for a week's fellowship around the great truth of the covenant of grace. This would delight the BRF. It would, no doubt, also encourage the Covenant Reformed Fellowship and promote the mission in Northern Ireland. Interested persons outside the United States and Canada should inquire of and make arrangements with Mr. Tony Horne, 9 Church Road, "Thornbury," Bristol BS12 1EJ, England.

Subject to the will of God, the BRF assures all who attend "a rich spiritual feast and a relaxing and enjoyable holiday."

See you in Ulster! □

— DJE

## Letters

### ● May Major Assemblies Depose?

I have some questions with respect to synodical authority raised by your current editorial series, "Church Unity, Reformed Synods, and Independence" (*The Standard Bearer*, Feb. 1, Feb. 15, and March 1, 1992).

Does classis or synod have the right and responsibility to depose officebearers? If so, for what reasons? When officebearers promote secession from their denomination, is this a legitimate reason for their deposition?

Paul Wiersma  
Hamilton, Ontario, Canada

### Response

Regarding your first question, concerning the right of major assemblies to depose officebearers, I have treated this, if briefly, in the editorial of June 1, 1991 that occasioned my present, short series of editorials ("The Binding Decisions of a Reformed Synod"). The Protestant Reformed Churches have insisted from the very beginning of their history that the major assemblies have no authority to discipline. Christ has given the keys of the kingdom to the local church in the office of pastor and teacher and

in the office of ruling elder. Only the local church may preach, administer the sacraments, and exercise discipline. This includes the deposition of officebearers. This is the church polity of the New Testament (cf. I Cor. 5, where the local church excommunicates). This is the church order of Dordt, which gives the local church the power of discipline (Articles 71-80) and never grants disciplinary power to the major assemblies. The Protestant Reformed position is expressed in the main by the Christian Reformed authorities on Reformed church order, Idzerd VanDellen and Martin Monsma, in their commentary on Article 79 of the church order



of Dordt (cf. *The Church Order Commentary*, Zondervan, 1954, pp. 327-329).

Deposition of officebearers by a major assembly is an attack on the autonomy of the local church and hierarchy.

What the denomination can do when a consistory refuses to discipline officebearers as the major assemblies have advised, or when a consistory otherwise refuses to consider decisions of the major assemblies settled and binding, is to declare the offending consistory outside the denomination as a body that has broken the denominational union.

As to your second question, secession from a denomination is not always sinful. Indeed, it is sometimes a calling from God so that failure to secede is sinful. This is the case when the denomination displays the marks of a false church by corrupting the gospel, denying the authority of Scripture and the confessions, polluting the sacraments, and refusing to exercise discipline upon the openly and impenitently ungodly, especially the heretics (cf. the Belgic Confession, Articles 28, 29). But there is a right and a wrong way to go about seceding. The right way is the way of protest and appeal followed by secession if synod refuses to heed and if the consistory is convinced that it cannot in good conscience before Christ remain within the denomination. The wrong way is to remain within the denomination without following the way of protest and appeal but all the while agitating against synodical decisions and making public charges of sin against fellow officebearers and fellow church members in the forum of public opinion. The only way of dealing with sin in the denomination that the Reformed church order recognizes is the way of protest and appeal (cf. Art. 31 of the church order of Dordt).

Officebearers guilty of schism are worthy of deposition according to Article 80 of the church order of Dordt. But only the consistory may, or can, depose them. If the consistory refuses, contrary to the advice of the

major assembly, the denomination must set that church outside the denomination as having broken the denominational union. □

— DJE

### ● The Son of David Through ...?

Please permit one more response to your article, "The Genealogy of Jesus (or, Jesus the Son of Nathan)" (the *Standard Bearer*, Dec. 15, 1991). I cannot agree with your position that Jesus is descended from David through Nathan, and is therefore not of the royal line. Let me defend as briefly as I can the position that Jesus is the Son of David through the royal line.

First, let me argue for the position that the genealogy of Matthew is that of Jesus through his mother Mary, while Luke's genealogy is that of Jesus through Joseph.

1. The very fact that the genealogy of Luke does not make mention of Mary is a strong indication that it is Joseph's genealogy.

2. Matthew's genealogy emphasizes physical descent. Not only is this implied in the word "begat" used throughout, but this is also the significance of the statement in Matthew 1:1 that this is the book of the "generation of Jesus Christ." The word for "generation" is a word that means "genesis or origin." Thus, the emphasis of the genealogy in Matthew is on the organic line of Christ. Then it cannot be the line of Joseph who had no organic connection with Jesus.

3. The argument that making Matthew's genealogy the genealogy of Jesus through Mary forces us to interpret "begat" in verse 16 also as actual physical begetting, so that then Jacob begets Joseph, which cannot be the case if the genealogy is that of Mary, carries weight. However, the problem is really the same in Luke, where in every case except that of Adam, "the son of" is used in the sense of "physically begotten." This argument can be used with regard to either genealogy.

4. The argument that the translation of the King James Version of

Luke 3:23 is incorrect, is tenuous at best. It is argued that rather than "Jesus ... being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, which was the son of Heli," we should read, "Jesus ... being the son (as was supposed of Joseph) of Heli." But this is an interpretation of the text, not a translation. The KJV is equally as valid and defensible.

Secondly, the argument that the prophecy spoken to wicked King Jeconiah (Jehoiachin) prevents the coming of Jesus through the royal line is not necessarily correct. That prophecy is found in Jeremiah 22:30, "Thus saith the Lord, Write ye this man *childless*, a man that shall not prosper in his days: *for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah.*" This prophecy need not be understood to preclude the possibility that the royal line nevertheless continued through Jeconiah. We know that he was not childless, Matthew 1:12. All that the prophecy means is that no son of Jeconiah will any longer prosper, sitting on the throne of David and ruling over the nation of Israel from Jerusalem. That is exactly what happened as a result of the Babylonian captivity and the destruction of Jerusalem. No son of David ever sat upon the throne again ruling in Jerusalem.

Third, the position that Jesus did not descend through the royal line does not do justice to the promises spoken to and about Solomon. There are several of these. The word of God to David in I Chronicles 22:10 is an example: "He (David's Son) shall build an house for my name; and he shall be my son, and I will be his father; and I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel for ever." It is the same one who will build the Lord's house (Solomon) whose throne will be established for ever. It seems clear that the "sure mercies of David" were continued through David's son, Solomon.

In the fourth place, the position that the royal line continued through Solomon gives great significance to historical events in connection with that line. For example, Athaliah's attempt to destroy the seed royal was



an attempt on the part of the Devil to prevent the coming of Christ. Hezekiah's concern in his sickness was not merely that he was going to die, or even that he was going to die without a male heir. But his great concern was that if he died without a son, not only would the royal line come to an end, but Christ could never be born.

Fifth, one of the important issues in this whole discussion of the genealogies is Jesus' RIGHT to the throne of His father David. The fact of the matter is that if Christ did not descend from David through the royal line, He has no more RIGHT to the throne than any other Israelite. The right to the kingship of Israel belonged

only to those who descended through the royal line of David.

And what is the outstanding significance of Jesus' descent from David through the royal line? It serves to illustrate the fundamental truth that God is faithful to His covenant promise notwithstanding the unfaithfulness of His covenant people. □

(Rev.) Ron Cammenga  
Loveland, CO

## All Around Us

Prof. Robert Decker

### ● The Fastest Growing Religion in America

One of every five individuals in the world claims to be an adherent of this religion. Both Europe and the United States are undergoing an explosion of evangelism by this religion. More than four million in the U.S. profess to be adherents of this religion. The goal of this religion is to have six million followers in the U.S. by the year 2,000. Already four million dollars have been earmarked for evangelism in America.

The religion of which we speak is Islam. The first mosque and Islamic center was built in Washington, DC in 1949. Today there are over one thousand mosques and Islamic centers in the U.S. Chicago, alone, is home to thirty-four mosques! There are more Muslims in the U.S. than in Libya. By the year 2,000 they expect to be the second largest religion in the U.S.

The Muslim "bible," the *Koran*, has many references to Bible characters such as Adam, Abraham, David, John the Baptist, and even Jesus. Muslims believe in one supreme God whom they call Allah. They deny the deity of Jesus Christ and His atoning death on the cross. The resurrection

of Jesus is blasphemy to them. Salvation by grace is replaced by salvation by good works.

Let us not believe every spirit, but try them by the test of Scripture. "Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world" (1 John 4:1-3).

*Gleaner*, Published by  
Evangelical Baptist Missions

### ● Troubles Escalate in CRC

Earlier (December 1, 1991 issue) we reported that the Christian Reformed Church in North America was losing churches on account of dissatisfaction over the issues of women in church office and creation/science. At that time we reported that the First CRC in Lethbridge, Alberta (Rev. Jelle Tuininga, pastor) and Trinity CRC in St. Catharines, Ontario (Rev. Calvin Tuininga, pastor), both with a large majority of their respective congregations, had severed relationships with the CRC. In addition, 17 families from two other Ontario congregations formed an independent Reformed Church with Rev. Jerome Julien as pastor. This latter congregation continues to grow and now numbers some 45 families. Rev. Julien, in

a recent conversation with this writer, indicates that his congregation feels a sense of relief. There is unity among the members, who enthusiastically receive the Word preached. Because of continued growth and because of the number of visitors at the worship services they are looking for a larger place of worship.

Since our last report, several more congregations or portions thereof have withdrawn from the CRC. These include Wellandport, Ontario; Salem, Oregon; and Pompton Plains, New Jersey. Twenty-one families (38 confessing members and 31 baptized members; 69 members total) have left the College Avenue CRC in Winnipeg, Manitoba. The council of the large (600 members) Mount Hamilton, Ontario church informed the congregation by letter that, "Unless the CRC shows clearly and concretely at the Synod 1992 meeting that it repents of its sins and returns to the Word of our God ... we cannot remain within the federation of CRC."

Again, let it be understood we do not glory in the troubles experienced by the CRC. It is our conviction that these troubles would have been avoided had not the leadership of the CRC opened church offices to women and had they taken a firm, biblical stand on the doctrine of creation. But church splits are never nice. Already there are disputes over property settlements. Court cases are likely to occur.

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



Families are divided. These are all extremely difficult experiences. But none of these difficulties may hinder God's people from fighting for the truth of His inspired and infallible Word. We commend these brothers and sisters for their courage.

*Christian Renewal*

## ● GKN Turns 100 in 1992

The *Gereformeerde Kerken* (GKN) will mark their 100th year in 1992. It was on June 17, 1892 that two separated churches merged at a union synod in Amsterdam. The one church, *Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken* (CGKN, *afschieding*) seceded from the state church, the *Hervormde Kerk* (NHK), in 1834. The other church was the *doleantie* (grieving), which broke from the NHK in 1886 under the leadership of Dr. Abraham Kuyper, Sr. Some in the CGKN refused to approve of the union, and they remain a separate denomination to this day. Their seminary is in Apeldoorn, and they are the mother church of the Free Reformed Churches in North America. Several of the ministers of this denomination received all or part of their seminary training in the Protestant Reformed Seminary.

The GKN has long since departed from its Reformed roots. It allows homosexuals in the pulpit, and denies the biblical account of the creation of the heavens and the earth. Some of its theologians do not consider the virgin birth of Jesus to be a necessary ingredient of the Christian faith. The GKN is in the process of reuniting with the NHK.

The 100th anniversary was the subject of a special issue of *Centraal Weekblad*, a GKN newspaper. Rev. E. Overeem said that they were not celebrating, nor even remembering. That would be a kind of triumphalism, he wrote. Rather, he called for a rethinking of the events of 1892. Other contributors noted that the two uniting churches had, in the main, two distinct spirits. Those of the earlier separation, the *afschieding* of 1834, brought a deep piety with them, which they had inherited from earlier re-

vival movements. The *doleantie* brought with them an emphasis on the church as an organism, which expressed itself actively in many spheres of life. Overeem called these differences "the depth and breadth" of the GKN.

While the synod of union in 1892 was all celebration, these and other differences persisted in the GKN. Each party continued with a sense of its own identity. Within the GKN there were "Akerken" (*afschieding*) and "Bkerken" (Kuyperian). The *afschieding* group argued, correctly, that the institute of the church was responsible for the training of ministers, and they maintained the Theological University of Kampen. Kuyper and his followers argued that a society-controlled university was responsible for theological education, and they maintained the Free University of Amsterdam. The two factions also differed over the question of the authority of the local consistories compared with that of the major assemblies (classis, synod).

In light of the apostasy rampant in the GKN there is little to celebrate. How quickly, less than a century, that great Reformed church departed from the faith. Let him that stands, take heed lest he fall!

*Reformed Ecumenical Council  
News Exchange*

## ● Conservatives in Main-line Churches Getting Vocal

Among United Methodists, the "Memphis Declaration" may be the most talked-about item between now and May 5, when the denomination's 1992 General Conference convenes in Louisville, Kentucky. The proclamation, signed January 25 in Memphis, TN, by some 80 clergy and lay members of the United Methodist Church (UMC), calls Methodists to return to biblical faithfulness and urges General Conference delegates to vote to uphold traditional sexual mores during the upcoming assembly. "Let us cease to debate homosexual practice as if the witness of the Scripture and the tradition of the church were not

clear from the beginning," the proclamation declares. Many prominent UMC evangelical leaders signed the document, including Bishop Richard Wilke of Little Rock, Arkansas and William Hinson, pastor of the largest UMC congregation in the country, First United Methodist of Houston.

Three members of a Presbyterian committee on abortion said they "cannot stand before God" and affirm the wording of a report the panel will present to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) this summer. Dr. Tom Miller, one of the three dissenting members of the PCUSA's Special Committee on Problem Pregnancies and Abortion, said "the truths of Scripture are being played down" in the majority report ratified January 19. The statement, to be released March 1, frowns on attempts to ban or limit access to abortion, but it outlines both pro-life and pro-choice views on the issue. Miller and two others on the committee wrote their minority report in order to express "what we believe is an obedient response to the lordship of Christ and the authority of Scripture." □

*National & International Religion  
Report*

### The Three Prayers

Lord, help me — so we pray —  
"Help me my work to do;  
I am so ignorant and weak,  
Make me more wise and true."

"Lord, help me to do thy work,"  
We pray when wiser grown,  
When on the upward way  
Our feet have further gone.

Lord, do thy work through me;  
So when all self we lose;  
His doing and His work, and we  
The tools His hand can use.

*Standard Bearer,  
September 1, 1933*



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## Guest Article

Rev. Jaikishin Mahtani

# Reflections on the Training of our Future Ministers

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*(This article is a report on a special program organized by the Theological Training Committee of the Evangelical Reformed Churches of Singapore.)*

*The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest.*

Matthew 9:37, 38

Only about thirty people were gathered on the hot Saturday afternoon of 25th January 1992. The opening word of welcome included a word of encouragement taken from the words of the prophet Zechariah, chapter 4, verse 10a: "For who hath despised the day of small things?" The Evangelical Reformed Churches in Singapore are only two in number. The work and influence of this young denomination seem negligible compared to the multitude of churches and Christian organizations in Singapore. At present, only one student is being trained for the ministry of the gospel. Yet, "despise not the day of small things...."

The Reformed faith has been planted in Singapore by the hand of the Lord Himself. It has pleased Him to raise up a people in this island who love the gospel of the Holy Scriptures

preserved so faithfully through the centuries in the precious heritage of the Reformed faith. While Singapore boasts of economic prosperity and political stability, the Lord has ensured that the light of the gospel also shines in this island, albeit in a small way. It is apparent to all that the labors in the small denomination of the ERCS continue to multiply. It is also abundantly clear that we need more ministers of the gospel. As Sower of the seed, the Lord reminds us that the harvest is plenteous but the laborers are few. His divine instruction to us is to pray for laborers to be sent to the harvest field. In obedience to the Lord's command, the Evangelical Reformed Churches, through the Theological Training Committee, continue to labor diligently for the preparation of ministers of the gospel in our churches. The aspirations for a Reformed Theological School in Singapore continue to grow. Plans are for a senior minister from the Protestant Reformed Churches to arrive in Singapore in the near future to help us in this labor. Although we feel that the interest amongst our people is not as great as desired, we believe that, with more information and encouragement, the saints will realize the great need of the hour. Hence this article on our special program, to keep our people and other of our friends and saints of God elsewhere informed, in order that they can join us in prayer for the awesome task facing our churches. Our Lord did not say that, because the harvest is plenteous and the laborers are few,

the church should become weary or frightened. He said, "Pray."

The purpose of this special program was to reflect upon the progress of the work already done as well as on the plans for the years to come. The keynote address was given by the chairman of the Theological Training Committee, Pastor Lau Chin Kwee. This address is also being prepared for publication. Pastor Lau gave an interesting and inspiring talk on the theme of the program: "Reflections on the Training of Our Future Ministers." He earnestly contended that this awesome labor demands the support of the denomination as a whole, with every member realizing its importance. He demonstrated from the Scriptures that the training of men for the gospel ministry is the responsibility of the church. In these days of pentecostalism and emphasis on emotions, he showed that the church needs a properly trained ministry, both in the academic and pastoral areas. We would encourage you to read Pastor Lau's speech, which covers many different and varying aspects of this awesome task of the training of our future ministers of the gospel in the ERCS. May this article whet your appetite in anticipation of Pastor Lau's which will be published in the near future.

The Theological Training Committee was present at the meeting to give a report on what is going on so that the leaders do not vainly press on with these labors without the support of the people. The work of the TTC, being a very important one, is being

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Rev. Mahtani is a pastor in the Evangelical Reformed Churches in Singapore.



done slowly and deliberately, in order that a good foundation may be laid for the years to come. The TTC was set up by the Classis to look into the training of students who aspire for the ministry as well as to supervise this training. Secondly, it was also given the mandate to continue with the training of our existing ministers. Presently, concentration is being given to the training of our only student, Cheah Fook Meng. Our pastors are giving him some classes and supervising the other courses he is taking at the Far Eastern Bible College. All this is being done in consultation with the Theological School of the Protestant Reformed Seminary so that Cheah Fook Meng can be as well prepared as possible for his seminary training. All is being finalized for the training of Cheah Fook Meng at the Protestant Reformed Seminary from 1993-1996. Upon his return, we plan to give him a year of under-study with our pastors before he is ordained for the ministry of our churches.

Besides these labors in training our future ministers, the TTC has also been given the mandate to train our existing ministers. This training will be done in consultation with the churches so that our pastors can be more effective in their ministry. However, the real task of the TTC would be to train our pastors so that, the Lord willing, our churches would eventually be able to supply trained manpower to lead and instruct in a Reformed Theological School in Singapore. Due to manpower and financial constraints, we are presently looking into local courses. Perhaps later, with the help of a minister-on-loan from the Protestant Reformed Churches, we will venture into more formal training abroad.

With regard to the setting up of a Reformed Theological School in Singapore, we have asked the Protestant Reformed Churches to provide us with help. Realizing that this kind of task will demand much wisdom and experience, we asked the PRC in 1989 for a professor or senior minister to come help us. We are thankful that the 1991 Synod of the PRC has ap-

proved the calling of a minister-on-loan for Singapore for this work. We as a TTC have given some clear directives as to what this minister would be doing when he comes to help us in these labors. Not only is there interest amongst our own people, but more and more also members of other churches express a desire for more instruction in the Reformed faith. Also for the sake of neighboring countries like Malaysia, Indonesia, India, etc., the presence of such a school would be of great benefit. A Reformed Theological School would be a most effective way of spreading the Reformed faith — training men who in turn will return to their lands to bring God's truth to their own people.

Besides manpower, we are also realizing the need of finances for this great task. Our churches have benevolence funds for the poor and building funds for places of worship; now as a denomination we will have to start thinking about giving towards the training of ministers. For the present the First Evangelical Reformed Church will be starting a Temporary Fund so that both churches can start giving for this worthy cause. As soon as all legal aspects can be cleared, we hope to have a denomination Student Aid Fund. For the time being, we may still need to ask our sister churches in the Protestant Reformed denomination to help us support the training of our students for the ministry.

It is good for the people to hear the TTC give a rather detailed report of all their labors. This surely has enabled many of us to become more conscious of the work in order that we might pray more intelligently for this mammoth task ahead of us.

However, what made the program really special was that the TTC invited our student Cheah Fook Meng to express his thoughts and plans for his training for the ministry. In a most interesting manner, Fook Meng related his experiences in FEBC, spoke of the training he has received from our pastors, and expressed his excitement over going to the Protestant Reformed Seminary. With six C's, he

gave us his resolutions: 1) Convictions — he wants to learn about convictions, he desires to be persuaded of what is right according to Scripture, and this through carefully studying the Bible and evaluating experiences in the light of Scriptures. 2) Character — through looking at models and learning from them, he seeks especially humility and gentleness; he wants not only information and conviction, but especially character. 3) Competence, especially in the languages, and he looks forward to going to the PR seminary because he knows that that competence is emphasized there; but he wants to be competent not only in academics, but also in counselling — he is resolved to be competent to counsel the saints. 4) Communion with God — our brother desires a DD, not a Doctor in Divinity, but he wants to be informed in Doctrine, and rich in Devotions. 5) Communication — he aspires to be a good preacher, but he knows that this cannot be possible without the first four resolutions. 6) Change — finally, he is willing to change — to change for the better as he continues to be trained. Fook Meng did not want to spend much time telling us about his personal circumstances, although he did mention that he plans to get married to Lim Lee Choo in December



*Fook Meng, touched by a love gift from church members.*



1992 and travel with her to the USA for his training. After expressing his desire to spend much time with the pastors to learn from them, he included a word of thanks for his training and for the support of the members. Especially he expressed thanksgiving to Almighty God that he could serve in the midst of a people with whom he agreed completely on the Reformed faith.

All of us present were surely filled with a sense of gratitude to God for what He has already done in this young man aspiring for the ministry. It is abundantly clear that the Lord is hearing our prayers and we have every reason to march on. In an expression of thanksgiving, there was taken at the program a collection which amounted to \$700.00. This was presented to Cheah Fook Meng to encourage him to buy good books for the ministry.

The program would not have been complete without one more significant item. The arrival of Rev. J. Kortering with his wife was a great thrill to the people of God here. They were sent here for six months to help the churches chart out the work for the minister-on-loan. Besides preaching for the churches regularly, Rev. Kortering met with the Sessions and various Classical Committees. Especially the TTC kept him busy with the labors of planning for a Reformed Theological School. Rev. Kortering gave a course on "Decision Making in a Reformed Church" and this was well attended by our people. He also began a course with Fook Meng on the Belgic Confession. Besides this, the TTC found his advice and experience of great value in all her deliberations during his stay here. Therefore, appropriately, he was asked for some final words of wisdom. Rev. Kortering took the opportunity to emphasize the importance of a trained ministry. Although on the one hand there were those who warned against the danger of losing one's faith when emphasizing academics, Rev. Kortering warned us that ignorance does not make a pastor. A minister needs much discernment; he needs a broad knowl-

edge so that he might effectively divide the word and apply it to God's people in the home, in the school, in the market. He concurred wholeheartedly with the speech given earlier and added biblical warrant to such ministerial training. However, he also rightly emphasized the aspect of prayer. The student for the ministry must not only study, but also pray. Such time spent in devotion and prayer is essential for preparation for the ministry. This would be the effective weapon so that the Word preached would go forth in the power of the Spirit. Wise words of encouragement indeed. The TTC, our student Fook Meng, and the churches will undoubtedly take heed to these significant words.

Rev. Kortering gave an appropriate closing remark also. He said that the opportunities for labor in this part of the world, and especially here in Singapore and the ERCS, are staggering. He encouraged us never to compromise on qualified laborers, but to put forth our best effort for the glory of God. He also encouraged the TTC and our churches in the goal of a theological school in Singapore some day, but meanwhile to begin training in the capacity we could and with the alternatives we had.

A gift of appreciation was given to the Korterings — a book on Singapore and a diary. The book was presented to Rev. Kortering so that he can prepare himself in case he would return to Singapore some day; the diary was for Mrs. Kortering to record fond memories if they would never set foot on this island again. Whether he will return, or whether another senior minister will be sent by the PR churches, the prayer of the ERCS is surely: "The harvest is plenteous, the laborers are few, LORD, send forth thy servants to thy harvest!"

As we began this program, so in closing prayer we were reminded not to despise the day of small things. After all, the eyes of the Lord go forth to and fro on the earth. He knows. Although only 30 met in a program unnoticed by the multitudes in Singapore, it was a significant event.



*Presentation of gift to the Korterings*

The Lord has begun this good work in Singapore, and He will perfect it in His good time and will. The ERCS need not become discouraged due to the mammoth task she faces. Neither should she in any way try to perform this work in the arm of flesh. It is not by might nor by power, but by His Holy Spirit. The master builder is the Lord Himself. The harvest field is His. He has sown the seed, He will give the increase. The Lord of lords is Jesus Christ, and all things are given to Him. Therefore we must go forth to preach the gospel and also to train men for that gospel ministry. All this so that in the end the glory will return to our God Almighty who is pleased to use earthen vessels to reveal the mystery of the gospel. This He has done through the ages, and continues to do today, also in the island of Singapore.

The harvest is plenteous, but the laborers are few, therefore pray! Pray that the Lord will bless the labors of the ERCS in the training of our future ministers! Pray that a Reformed Theological School may be set up in Singapore according to God's time and will! Pray that God will send forth laborers into His harvest field!

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## The Strength of Youth

Rev. Steven Key

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# Mind Games

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My younger brothers and sisters in the faith: I call you today to examine the way you think. I have entitled this article "Mind Games." There are plenty of them being played today. But what often are called mind games are not games at all. In fact, there is a battle being waged today. And that battle is being fought on the battlefield of our own minds.

Have you ever stopped to consider what a wonderful gift God gave you in your mind? When you consider the concept of the mind in the Bible, and particularly in Paul's epistle to the Romans, you find that the mind is the highest, most noble part of a man's soul. It is the mind which makes it possible for man to be religious. It is the mind which makes it possible for man to know God, and to recognize his own relation to God consciously and willingly. It is your mind, in other words, which makes you distinct from all other creatures. That mind also marks you as a responsible creature before God.

The Bible speaks often of our minds. It does so with purpose. Our God, who knows us through and through, who knows our every thought, who hears our every word and sees our every action; our God who knows that we are flesh, to use the language of Scripture, also knows that the devil is constantly playing mind games with us. That master deceiver does that through many means, because he knows that if we are not living out of Christ, and if we do not exercise the *mind* of Christ, he

can easily get us to exercise a wrong style of thinking, that plays right into his hand, so to speak.

Mind games take on many different forms. Let me mention just one concrete example.

About a hundred years ago there was a Russian physiologist by the name of Pavlov. While studying brain functions, Pavlov happened to notice that his dog began to salivate whenever food was placed in front of him. So Pavlov began to experiment. Whenever he put food under the dog's nose, he rang a bell. After a while that dog became conditioned to associate the ringing of the bell with food. Some time later Pavlov pulled a fast one on the dog. He just rang the bell; no food. The dog was so used to hearing the bell and equating it with food that he salivated anyway. Pavlov gave this a name: conditioned reflex. He concluded that all mental activity depends upon a chain of conditioned reflexes and responses. Now that conclusion certainly is open to criticism, and is not true of all mental activity. But when you consider his hypothesis, you will find that there is an element of truth there that calls for further examination.

You wonder what Pavlov and his dog have to do with your mind? His theory has been frequently applied to you directly and to your way of thinking. Prior to my call to pursue the ministry, I was studying business management and marketing at Western Michigan University. In an advertising class the underlying theory was this—and I apply it to you young people: "We have to create a mentality among you that causes you to salivate when we ring your chimes." (Do you recognize Pavlov's theory?) So what do the advertisers do? They hit you with certain advertising

schemes frequently enough that all you do is see certain things or hear certain words or music and you automatically respond. In other words, they try to get you to lay aside your thinking processes and become little more than one huge, exposed nerve-ending that can be manipulated by their sensory stimuli.

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*The area of economics  
is only one small area  
where people are trying  
to play games  
with your mind.*

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One of the major advertising agencies in the world in the years that I was in college — Doyle, Daine, Burnbach — published a book entitled *A Study of Youth*. It was not a book written for the general public. It was written for the advertising profession. The purpose of the book was this: To explore how to get youth not to think, but just to buy the manufacturers' product. And do you know what? They are pretty effective at playing those mind games with you! That is why some of you go out and buy things that you do not need, with money that is God's and not yours, at a price that is absolutely ridiculous, to attain a certain status. If you sat down and really thought about it, you would realize how foolish it is. But you do it. You know you do; and not only you as young people, but we all do so to a greater or lesser degree. Do not think for a moment that a shoe manufacturer would pay Michael Jordan millions of dollars, and spend more millions for television spots, unless he has good reason to believe that that could influence you to buy NIKES.

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



Let me tell you something: If a brewery or a car manufacturer is going to spend megabucks to play mind games with you, you had better believe they are playing hard to ring your chimes. And the area of economics is only one small area where people are trying to play games with your mind.

The devil is constantly playing mind games with you. You had better be aware of his attacks. He knows that our minds, which were created by God beautiful and good, have been corrupted by sin. In the providence of God, you belong to those who have come under the means of grace and have been instructed in a different mind set. And to you who believe, God says that He has given you a spiritual mind, the mind of the Spirit of Christ, by which you know all things (I John 2:20). That does not mean that you naturally know all things spiritual, that you naturally know the truth. But it means that God has given you the mind of Christ, so that by the testimony of the Spirit *through the Scriptures* you know the truth and you discern the lie. But the fact remains that we carry with us in our old sinful natures the mind of the old man which tries to shut God out and which is very open to the influence of those who would play mind games with us. And by many means and through many people, the devil would keep you from applying to your thought processes the Christian principles in which you have been instructed.

The question to you, therefore, is a personal one: How do you use your mind? Do you use your mind in such a way that you know that you belong to Jesus Christ? In Romans 8:5, 6, we read, "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." Do you see how important is a right mind and the right use of the mind?

The devil so twists the mind, that young men and young women freely give themselves over to the pleasure madness of this world with

all its corruption. The devil so attacks *your* minds, that he will try to get you to believe that your relationships with other individuals (peers) are more important than your personal and experiential relationship with God. Do you think that you can have a relationship of friendship with someone who is not committed to Jesus Christ and to the truth of God and still honor Christ? You are not in your right mind! Do you think that you can spend time partying with drunken young men and women and with fornicators, and yet avoid harming yourself spiritually? You are not in your right mind! Do you think that you can sit in front of the television and watch the filth that is readily accessible to you, and that you can serve Christ by doing so? I say, the devil has twisted your thinking!

I thank God that He has gifted many of you, I hope most of you, with the mind of Christ. What I am concerned about is that you put that mind of Christ to work and do not be a Pavlov's dog who salivates with lust and covetousness every time your chimes are rung.

Hear the Word of God in Romans 12:2: "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

The inspired apostle speaks of "the renewing of your mind." That reference is to something spiritual. Your mind is renewed when, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, the truth of Scripture is laid hold of and believed and practiced, so as to replace the error and ignorance that

once prevailed. That renewal must take place daily and you must grow in that. The apostle is saying, "Let your mind determine what shall be your walk." Be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

Perhaps you are thinking, "Yes, but...." The powers of darkness are at work even now trying to influence your thinking. "Yes, but then I must practically go out of the world!" Start walking. Not a single person speaking truthfully ever said that commitment to Christ is easy. Maybe you say, "But then I will lose my name, my friends." Lose them. If your "friends" are given over to the mind games of Satan, they are the wrong kind of friends for you. He who would be a friend of the world is the enemy of God (James 4:4). Maybe you are thinking, "But I might have to die then, if I walk so narrowly." Die then. There is no other way. Jesus said in Matthew 16:25, "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it." Turn that over in your mind.

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*God's will does not  
drop out of the sky  
like a brick  
with a note attached.*

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That renewal of our minds requires that the will of God becomes a living reality to our consciousness and conviction. And that means that we must live out of the Scriptures. A lot of so-called or self-named Christians are frustrated because they are running around looking for some-

In order that this column might best serve "the strength of youth," I would like input from you young people and young adults who read this column. May I ask therefore that if you have any questions, either of a doctrinal nature or pertaining to Christian practice, you send them to me at 225 Pierce St., Randolph, WI 53956. (Questions relating to life in college should still be addressed to Rev. Dykstra; but those of a more general nature may be sent to me.) I will then try to treat your questions in this column. Although I ask you to include your name and address when you submit a question, I will treat all subject matter without revealing from where the questions arose. Any comments will also be appreciated.

— Pastor Key



thing that they will never find. For God's will does not drop out of the sky like a brick with a note attached. Knowing God's will is a matter of commitment to fellowship with Him, and a matter of the development of your mind in relationship to the Scriptures.

The apostle Paul gives the in-

spired instruction in Philippians 4:8: "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." He is not

saying, "Incidentally, if you do not have anything else to do, think about a few of these things." He is saying, "This is the direction in which you need to direct your mental activity. 'Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus' (Phil. 2:5). And the God of peace shall be with you. □

## Cloud of Witnesses

Prof. Herman Hanko

# John Hus

While we usually consider Luther's act of nailing his 95 theses on the chapel door of the church of Wittenburg to be the beginning of the Reformation, the fact remains that God began the work of reformation long before the days of Martin Luther.

Two men are called "Pre-reformers" by historians: John Wycliffe of England and John Hus of Bohemia. Perhaps to call them pre-reformers really does them no injustice; but they were more than pre-reformers; they were reformers in the truest sense of the word — and perhaps Hus even more than Wycliffe. The reformation of the church in the 16th century would have been impossible without them.

The two men were different. Wycliffe was first of all a scholar for whom preaching was secondary. Hus was above all a preacher, and scholarly studies were subordinate to preaching. The dusty library was Wycliffe's home; the pulpit was Hus'. Wycliffe labored all his life for reform and left no movement that continued to the Reformation. Hus started a

movement of reform that not only lasted to the Reformation, but has come down to the present in almost pure form, primarily in the Moravians. Wycliffe's teachings were almost identical to those of Luther and Calvin; Hus, apparently, was never able to condemn the Roman Catholic corruption of the Lord's Supper. Wycliffe reflected all his life the middle class gentility of his upbringing; Hus, after the pattern of Luther, was of rough peasant stock. Wycliffe, it seems, did not know what it meant to laugh; Hus could banter and joke with his students even while lecturing. Wycliffe went to the grave in peace; Hus was burned to death on a martyr's pyre. But God used them both.

In Luther's famous debate with John Eck at Leipzig, Eck charged Martin Luther with being a Hussite because Luther appealed to the supreme authority of Scripture. Luther was not sure about this, but spent the noon break reading what Hus had written. At the beginning of the afternoon session he surprised everyone by loudly proclaiming: "Ich ben ein Hussite!" (I am a Hussite.)

John Hus was born in 1373 in the southern part of Bohemia (now Czechoslovakia) in the village of Husinec — hence his surname, Hus. The name Hus means "goose," a word which Hus often used in referring to himself. While he was imprisoned in

Constance, he wrote his friends in Bohemia that he hoped the goose might be released from prison and that "if you love the goose," try to secure the king's aid in delivering him from prison.

He was born of poor peasant parents, all of which meant that his early life was one of hardship and cruel poverty under the crushing heel of lords and princes. The difficulties of such a life were, amongst a peasant population, broken only by wild and riotous orgies of drinking and fornication. While it is clear from Hus' later letters that he was as riotous as his fellows, nevertheless, he earnestly confessed that he was never guilty of the immorality of his peers. From this the Lord saved him in preparation for greater work.

While his parents were not noted in any way for their piety, and apparently gave little thought to John's spiritual instruction, they did want him to go to school because they saw education as the only way for John and for them to escape their grinding poverty. In fact, they apparently considered an education for the priesthood to be the surest way to wealth, an irony that spoke volumes concerning the sad state of affairs in the Romish Church.

Although John became a highly educated man, his peasant upbringing remained with him all his life, and

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



his enemies repeatedly taunted him for his crude and rough origins.

In 1385, at thirteen years old, John began his formal education in elementary school at Prachatice. Finishing this part of his education in 1390, he went to the University of Prague, acquiring a B.A. degree in 1393 (at the age of 20); a M.A. in 1396; and a B.D. in 1404. Until he earned his M.A., life was financially difficult; and he earned a bit of money by singing and doing manual work. But upon gaining his M.A. degree, he was qualified to teach, which also he did in the university. He was soon the most popular teacher in the university, partly because he broke old traditions by refusing to be the stern and unbending professor, preferring to laugh, joke, and socialize with his students.

In 1402 John was appointed rector and preacher at the Chapel of the Holy Infants of Bethlehem in Prague. Thus John occupied two of the most strategic positions in all Bohemia — although he was probably unaware of their importance. The city of Prague had a lengthy tradition of reform and could boast some outstanding preachers, who even preached from the Scriptures. To this tradition Hus fell heir. The University of Prague was in the very center of the reform movement and was a place of ferment as new ideas and programs for the church were constantly being discussed. The chapel to which Hus was appointed was raised in 1391 by a rich merchant as a center for reform preaching.

It was about the time that Hus began preaching that he also was converted. It seems as if his conversion was centered in his calling to preach. Prior to 1400 Hus had studied for the priesthood in the firm conviction that this was the way to escape from poverty. But when actually confronted with the task of preaching, his life underwent a fundamental change and he was overcome by the consciousness of the great task of preaching the gospel of Christ. He himself wrote of how important he considered preaching: "By the help of God I have



*John Hus, the Czech reformer*

preached, still am preaching, and if his grace will allow, shall continue to preach; if perchance I may be able to lead some poor, tired, or halting soul into the house of Christ to the King's supper."<sup>1</sup>

The teachings of John Wycliffe had come to Bohemia as early as 1390. A close alliance had been established between England and Bohemia because England's king, Richard II, had married Anne of Bohemia, the sister of Bohemia's king. Scholars had traveled between the countries, and one eminent scholar, Jerome of Prague, had spent some time in Oxford, Wycliffe's school, where he had absorbed the teachings of Wycliffe. On his return, he had spread Wycliffe's writings and teachings throughout Prague and the university.

Although reform had been in the air for many years, the spread of Wycliffe's teachings gave it direction and a doctrinal foundation. John Hus had become thoroughly familiar with the teachings of Wycliffe and, convinced of their truth, he had himself begun to teach them in the university

and preach them in the pulpit. It is not surprising that the full fury of the Roman Catholic Church was soon turned against him. When general reform, especially of clerical corruption, was preached, even many Roman Catholics supported the reform movement. But when Hus and others began to preach doctrinal reform as well as moral reform, Rome turned in a rage against the reformers, and especially against Hus.

It seems as if from the time Hus began preaching, Hus was under suspicion. A curious document turned up near the end of Hus' life which was a collection of quotes from Hus' preaching and teaching, taken secretly and obviously with the intent of using them to charge Hus with heresy. But the more Hus emphasized that at the root of Rome's evils lay doctrinal error, the more Hus lost the support of the church, of the politicians, and of most of those in authority. It was the students Hus taught in school, and the common people who loved his preaching, who continued to support him.

As the opposition to Hus grew, pressure of many kinds was put on him. First 45 statements, purported to be Hus' teachings, were condemned. Then preaching was forbidden in all the chapels. Then, when Hus refused to stop preaching, he was excommunicated by the archbishop. Soon he was summoned to Rome for trial; but, knowing that he would never escape Rome alive, he refused to go and was excommunicated by the pope. Even this was not enough; Prague was put under the interdict so that no religious services could be performed in the entire city. Gradually the might of Rome was squeezing Hus into a corner.

In pity for the citizens of the city, and so that the interdict could be removed, Hus left and returned to the area of his hometown. But his new residence soon became a center for preaching in all the surrounding countryside and it gave him the quietness that he needed to write. Perhaps this move did not lessen his effectiveness, but was God's means of spreading

<sup>1</sup>Victor Budgen, *On Fire For God*. This book is far and away the best biography of John Hus which I have seen. It is accurate, detailed, but interestingly written and in a popular style.



Hus' teaching beyond the confines of Prague.

At any rate, Rome could tolerate Hus no longer. He was summoned to the Council of Constance in 1414, a council meeting called to settle the papal schism. Three popes were all claiming to be the legitimate pope, and the outrageous situation was making a mockery of the claims of the church.

The Emperor Sigismund promised Hus a safe-conduct both to and from Constance regardless of the outcome of Hus' trial. And it was for this reason that Hus determined to go, although he was not at all certain that he would emerge from the trial alive. He told his friends, however, that a faithful testimony to his Lord and Savior required that he go.

Hus would have been safe in his hometown. He testified to this in Constance before his accusers when he told them: "I have stated that I came here of my own free will. If I had been unwilling to come, neither that king (Wenzel) nor this king (Sigismund) would have been able to force me to come, so numerous and so powerful are the Bohemian nobles who love me, and within whose castles I should have been able to lie concealed."

For one month, while in Constance, Hus was permitted to move about freely, even administering the Lord's Supper daily in his lodgings, the home of a widow whom he called his "widow of Zarephath." But Rome's godless and treacherous clerics could not permit Hus to remain free, and so he was imprisoned on the trumped up charge that he had attempted to escape the city in a wagon.

Three months he was in a dungeon in a Dominican convent with a cell alongside the latrines. On March 24, 1414, he was chained and transferred to a castle dungeon at Götteleven, where he was handcuffed and bound to a wall at night, while free to walk around in chains during the day. After 73 days, he was transferred to a Franciscan friary where he was subjected to cruel and heartless

hearings in efforts to make him recant. Through all his imprisonment he was permitted no books, not even his Bible. He was nearly starved to death at times, and throughout he was so cruelly treated that he suffered from hemorrhage, headaches, vomiting, and fainting spells.

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*... his testimony was to be  
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testimony of martyrdom.*

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When finally he was brought before the council, he was permitted to say nothing, although repeatedly he made an effort to give the testimony to his faith he longed to give. God did not will that his testimony would be that of a confession of his mouth; his testimony was to be the far more powerful testimony of martyrdom.

The trial was a joke, a violation of every rule of justice, a farce of the worst sort. But during its proceedings, Hus was repeatedly made the object of mockery, derision, humiliating treatment of the worst sort, and a cruel deposition when he was stripped of all his clerical clothing and publicly defrocked.

Finally he was sentenced to burning at the stake, and the council, afraid of spilling the blood of a man, turned him over to the secular authorities to carry out the sentence.

One interesting sidelight gives a glimpse into the magnificent wisdom of God. When Hus was sentenced to death, he appealed to the Emperor Sigismund, who was present, to rescue him, reminding Sigismund of his promise of a safe-conduct. While Sigismund did not have the courage to keep his promise, he did have the grace to blush a fiery red at Hus' rebuke. All this would not mean so much in itself. But just over 100 years later, Luther went to Worms under the safe conduct of Charles V, emperor of Germany, and made his courageous stand for Scripture. Then too the Roman Catholic Church wanted

Luther killed, but Charles insisted on the safe conduct being enforced. When Charles was later asked why he permitted the dastardly heretic, Luther, to escape, Charles replied that he remembered all too well the blush of shame on the face of Sigismund, when Sigismund treacherously went back on Hus' safe conduct.

Several times on the way to the place of execution, Hus attempted to speak to the people, but was in every case silenced. Finally, when the crowd arrived at the stake, Hus, with tears in his eyes, knelt in prayer. It was noon. Hus' hands were tied behind him and his neck bound to the stake with a sooty chain. The straw and wood were piled around him up to the chin and rosin was sprinkled on the wood. When he was asked to recant once last time, his response was: "I shall die with joy to-day in the faith of the Gospel which I have preached." As the flames arose around him, he sang twice: "Christ, thou Son of the living God, have mercy upon me." Praying and singing until the smoke began to choke him, he died a faithful martyr of Jesus Christ. To remove all possible opportunities for his relics to be preserved, his clothing was thrown into the fire and all the ashes were gathered and thrown into the Rhine River.

So died this faithful man of God sealing his testimony with his blood.

Hus was a godly man throughout his reformatory career, and he won the grudging praise of his enemies. A Jesuit testified: "John Hus was even more remarkable for his acuteness than his eloquence; but the modesty and severity of his conduct, his austere and irreproachable life, his pale and melancholy features, his gentleness and affability to all, even the most humble, persuaded more than the greatest eloquence." Another Roman Catholic, later a pope, wrote: "He was a powerful speaker, and distinguished for the reputation of a life of remarkable purity."

Hus was not the original thinker that Wycliffe was, and indeed borrowed most of his thoughts from Wycliffe—especially Wycliffe's views



of the church as the elect body of Christ and the sole authority of Scripture. But Hus was, what Wycliffe never attained, a powerful preacher of the Scriptures. By preaching he moved a nation. And by preaching he established a church in Bohemia which Rome could never destroy, but

which joined the Reformation just over 100 years later.

Rome has the blood of countless people of God on her hands. She has never expressed one word of sorrow or regret for this. The blood of the martyrs still cries from under the altar against Rome: "How long, O Lord,

holy and true, wilt thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?"

But to Hus, along with the other martyrs of Christ, was given a white robe and the testimony that they should rest a little while until their brethren should be killed as they were.



## Contribution

Rev. Kenneth Koole

# Analyzing the Disciples' Mistaken Kingdom Notion

*(What follows is the text of a speech given last year to a gathering of Sunday School teachers. I was asked to address the subject of the inability and refusal of the disciples to understand Jesus' teaching on the nature of His Kingdom.)*

Let me state here at the outset that there is a very short explanation for the disciples' inability to understand Christ's teaching on His Kingdom and for their refusal to receive it. You know the answer as well as I. It was because the Holy Spirit had not as yet been poured out, so they were dull of understanding. Once the Holy Spirit came upon them, all became clear. They became receptive to the truth of Christ's Kingdom and were able to expound its mysteries.

I have an idea however that giving such as an answer would be less than adequate, and you would find the answer somewhat less than illuminating or helpful in explaining things to Sunday school students. So I do have a bit more than that.

Still, we must never forget that the key to the disciples' understanding the nature of the Kingdom lies in

the coming of the Holy Spirit and the wonder of His gift to the church.

The maddening dullness of the disciples in the Gospels to understand Jesus' teachings on the nature of His kingdom serves to underscore just how tremendous a gift the Holy Spirit was and is. We ought to use this inability of the disciples to understand Christ's words to point this out. It is the Holy Spirit who makes the difference. Our children must understand it is not that we today are so much smarter than the disciples, but rather it is the Holy Spirit who has quickened our understanding. And when the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples they too had deep insights into Christ's words. In fact, what we know about Christ's Kingdom today is exactly through the writings of these selfsame disciples when they became the wise Apostles.

Let me state that I can understand why for teachers the matter under consideration stands as a very important and practical question in teaching the Gospel accounts.

Again and again we have to confront the student with the unbelief of the hardhearted Pharisees, and with their rejection of Jesus as Christ because of their earthly, fleshly conception of the Kingdom. They were unbelievers.

Well, our children are shrewd enough to realize and ask, "But wasn't that also the conception of Jesus' disciples? Were they not guilty of the same error? Yet, the Pharisees are condemned for unbelief, but not the disciples. Is this fair? Or doesn't it really make much difference what you believe on these matters after all?" Such are normal questions in a child's mind, and they must be answered.

We want our children to identify themselves with the disciples, but not with the Pharisees. Certainly there must be something about the disciples that distinguished them as believers from the unbelieving Pharisees. What that difference is we will note a bit further down.

An important question is, then, what was the disciples' saving virtue despite their obvious misunderstanding of and refusal to listen to Christ in this matter?

First, however, there is the shared misconception.

Really there is little to distinguish what the disciples were looking for in the coming Kingdom, from what the Pharisees expected and demanded. Both were looking for something earthly and visible, with its center in David's Jerusalem, with political and military prestige. As well, it

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



would be distinctively Jewish. The temple would be the only place worship would be allowed (idolatry at long last completely overthrown); and the LAW of Moses would be applied with all its force.

It was especially this latter that all expected the Messiah to bring to bear on the lives of the people. That stands to reason. After all, consider what it was that had brought about the diminishing of the Jews and God's judgments upon Israel and their subjection to the heathen nations to begin with. What else but the failure to keep God's law in conduct and worship!

So, what would reverse the process and bring God's favor? What else but keeping the law scrupulously, having nothing to do with the 'unclean' whether they were Jew or Gentile.

We could properly analyze the disciples' refusal to discard their own earthly kingdom conception by considering it from three angles.

In the first place we ought to sympathize with their perplexity in this matter; from a second perspective, the disciples are to be criticized (that is, reproved); and finally we ought to consider what it was that distinguished their 'unbelief' concerning Christ's words in this matter from the Pharisees' unbelief. For they are of a different species despite their outward similarity.

In the area of sympathy we must not lose sight of how central the cross is to any proper understanding of the heavenly, invisible, internal nature of Christ's kingdom.

The perplexity of the disciples ties in with their powerful attachment to the temple in Jerusalem. This must never be underestimated. The temple was where God had chosen to dwell. It was beyond them how religious life could outlive its usefulness.

You see, the disciples understood well that the logical inference of dispensing with a visible, earthly, Jerusalem-centered kingdom meant doing away with the temple worship. The disciples understood that intuitively. But it was inconceivable.

"You mean to say, we will be

able to ignore the sacrifices which not even Abraham could ignore, and we will need no human priesthood? How can you draw nigh to God without these?"

And moreover, what was it that had gotten Israel, the people of God, into trouble with God to begin with? Wasn't it failure to use the temple properly, laxity in attending its functions? And now the new Kingdom would not need this visible holy place of God? Righteousness would now mean not using it? setting it aside?

After all these years of punishing Israel exactly for NOT using the temple, now God was going to approve their dismissing it? You make sense out of that! Such was the disciples' quandary.

But how do you make sense out of it without the CROSS and understanding its power? I submit that you do not.

Secondly, how could the promise concerning David's son be realized if there was no throne in Jerusalem? Where was the Messiah going to rule from? Babylon? Rome? Grand Rapids? It was beyond their comprehension.

To put it in comparable terms, so our children can identify with the disciples' perplexity, it almost would be like the minister announcing next Sunday that from now on there will be no more Sunday worship, no more coming together at church. We do not need 'church' anymore. Families will worship in their own homes from now on.

Use this example in Sunday school and possibly the response might be, "All right!" That's typical 'mob' psychology. But get the same children up Sunday morning as parents and tell them you are not going to church anymore, and you will get their real reaction of perplexity and worry. "All our friends continue to go to church and to follow the same religious routine they always have, but not us? There is something wrong about all this. This can not be!" You would not convince your children very quickly that such a change in their religious conduct was right.

Well, what Christ was saying to the disciples was that new. What Jesus was saying did not make sense. No temple, no sacrifices? How then will we enter God's holy presence? Our fathers were punished for forsaking the sacrifices. How can there be some kind of invisible kingdom that does not need these things? How will there be atonement for sin? Great questions present themselves.

And besides that, if Jesus was the Christ, the Son of David, He would have to rule in person. But how could that occur if He went to this wretched cross that He talked about every now and then, and died? How could He die and rule over the promised kingdom at the same time? You put the two together. It's absurd.

Thus, you read in Luke 18:34 (after Christ informed His disciples that He was going to Jerusalem to fulfill the words of the prophets, namely, the Gentiles were to put Him to death, and the third day He would rise again), "And they understood none of these things, and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken."

The disciples reasoned like this: You can rule in Jerusalem and establish a kingdom, OR you can let your enemies put you to death, but surely you can not do both. They did not understand how Jesus could die (and not seize David's throne in Jerusalem), and yet rule over a kingdom.

Remember that, relative to the disciples, you and I stand on the other side of the cross. To the New Testament believer, how the cross and Christ's death puts everything into perspective, and how it does away with the ongoing necessity of the temple with its sacrifices, becomes amazingly clear. Hindsight is like that. It is 20-20.

But go to the other side of the cross and try to comprehend that somehow the Christ's coming is going to make the temple, the heart of David's theocracy and the heart of God's worship since Moses' day, obsolete. It becomes much more difficult. Try to comprehend that by dying Christ will be victorious, and thus



establish His kingdom and defeat His enemies.

How is it possible that what happens to you is what your enemies want to happen to you (namely, your death), and in that way you achieve your objective? Is not death defeat?

And so the disciples blocked out many of Christ's words. They heard what they wanted to hear and ignored what they could not fathom. The disciples became condescending to Jesus. He was pessimistic by nature; that is all. In time His common sense would prevail. They would stick with Him until He saw the light.

The point is, until you grasp the cross and how it replaces the temple

with its sacrifices and priesthood as the proper fulfillment, you really can not grasp the non-earthly, non-visible, spiritual kingdom Jesus came to establish. It was only after Christ arose that it began to dawn on the disciples that Jesus could die, and that His death at the hands of His enemies did not spell the end of everything.

It was only when they saw Christ ascend up into that higher place, heaven, that they began to understand that Christ's death was a way to a kingdom ruled from a throne greater than the one in Jerusalem, namely the throne in heaven.

With regard to their understand-

ing (and it is always hard to believe, to accept, what you can not understand), the disciples stood on the wrong side of the cross.

Because of who Jesus was, namely, the Son of God, we must not excuse these disciples for not submitting to Christ's words. They simply should have believed and accepted everything He said. This is a lesson every one of us must learn (we must tell the children). Still, our criticism must be prefaced with a sympathy lest our children become condescending towards these 'dull-witted,' rural disciples, and they become wise in their own eyes. □

... to be continued

## Book Reviews

*The Secret of Communion with God*, by Matthew Henry; Kregel Publications, Grand Rapids, Michigan; 128 pp., \$6.95 (paper). [Reviewed by Rev. John A. Heys.]

This book, written in 1712 by Matthew Henry, brings to us an awesome calling, which presents to us what we must do every day without any exception. Let it be pointed out that this is not a book about the sacrament of Holy Communion, even though the word communion appears in the title of the book. The word communion here means covenant fellowship with God.

We do well to read this book in order to be reminded of our calling, and to become more earnest in our prayers. The title of the first section of the book is, "How to Begin the Day with God." With prayer we must begin the day. As the book points out, we must with prayer commune with God every morning of every day.

Read the book to see more fully in chapter one the calling which we have to come to Him in prayer, and the blessedness for us when we do have communion with Him through prayer. Surely, coming to God in

prayer the first thing in the morning, and understanding our calling to do so, will help us to do what the next chapter presents, namely, "How to Spend the Day with God."

Reading the second chapter in this book raises an important question in our minds. The book indirectly, but very really, raises the question to the reader as to how often he has God in mind during the day. We do well to read the book for the strengthening of our faith in God, and to move us to a closer spiritual fellowship with God in whatever situation we find ourselves.

To pray to God the first thing in the morning, and then not to have Him in our thoughts the rest of the day, does not manifest a spiritual life of faith in Him. The text Matthew Henry quotes as the basis for what he writes in this second chapter is Psalm 25:5c. There we read, "On thee do I wait all the day." And, beginning on page 55, Matthew Henry presents to us four reasons why we must wait on God during all the day, and not merely the first thing in the morning. Get this book and read those four reasons presented in chapter two.

Then follow the six reasons why

we should not allow ourselves to wander away from God in our thoughts. He concludes this chapter with an application of our calling to wait on God. Read those nine points for your instruction, and the five motives for persuading us to "live a life of communion with God, by waiting on Him all the day."

It is noteworthy that each of the three chapters in this book begins with a quotation from the book of Psalms. The book begins chapter one with the quoting of Psalm 5:3, namely, "My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up." The second chapter begins with the quoting of Psalm 25:5. There David writes, "On thee do I wait all the day." And now chapter three begins with Psalm 4:8. Notice then that, having written about and quoted Scripture in regard to praying in the morning, and then of waiting on God all the day, the author of this book now quotes these words of David, "I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep; for thou, Lord, maketh me dwell in safety."

Thus all the day, from the first thing in the morning, until we close



our eyes in sleep at night, we must, as David did, have communion with God through prayer. We do well, therefore, to read this book, and in this third chapter to consider the "holy serenity," or peace, which we have with God, and the "holy security," which is the fruit of God's favor or grace. With that confidence we can close our eyes in sleep at night, with the assurance that all is well; for we are in the hands of an almighty, gracious God. Read, then, how this book presents to us the truth that prayer is the privilege and duty of those who are chosen in Christ.

This third chapter of the book contains four main sections; and then it concludes with an application of what had been presented in that chapter. The first of these four sections deals with the fact of our lying down to sleep. The second presents our lying down in peace when we seek sleep. The third deals with composing wisdom in regard to sleep. And the fourth one presents the necessity of our believing and having complete dependency upon God.

Then comes the application of all this. Therein we find six points. And in this section the author begins with the truth that we must carry our religion with us wherever we go; and thus also do this when we lie down to sleep.

How true is that last statement in the last paragraph of this book. The author states, "It is certain, all that will go to heaven hereafter begin their heaven now, and have their hearts there." The idea is that, in this life already, such who enter into spiritual rest, every night before they fall asleep have evidence that they "shall not rest day or night from praising Him, who is, and will be, our eternal rest."

Read the book for the strengthening of faith, and for more enjoyment of sweet communion with God already in this life. Living in a day and age that, from a spiritual point of view, is increasingly devilish and antichristian, it is well to be reminded of our calling to have more communion with God, rather than with Satan and his godless host.

By communion with God in prayer and contemplation we will know that which is secret. We will know and enjoy what He wrought for us through Christ and His cross, and in His grace. Be sure, then, to have communion with God, and know the joy which unbelievers cannot have and enjoy. What is a secret, that is, hidden from the unbelievers, those saved by God's grace will everlastingly know and enjoy. ■

*Grace and Glory Days*, by Thomas Boslooper. Clearwater, Florida: Woodswalker Books, 1990. 130 pages. Paper. No price given. [Reviewed by the Editor.]

*Grace and Glory* was a religious periodical published in Western Michigan in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Its leading editors were the four preachers who are the subjects of this informative little history: M.R. DeHaan, Harry Bultema, Albert Waalkes, and John Bennink. All were originally ministers in the Reformed Church of America or in the Christian Reformed Church. All were either deposed or dismissed because of their falling away from the Reformed faith to dispensationalism (premillennialism).

This error involved them in the denial of infant baptism and the covenant. DeHaan's troubles in Calvary Reformed Church began when he refused to preach Question 74 of the Heidelberg Catechism. Harry Bultema ended in a complete repudiation of water baptism. The only baptism recognized in his church was the baptism with the Holy Spirit. Water baptism was for the dispensation of the Jews.

DeHaan started Calvary Undenominational Church in Grand Rapids (now Calvary Church); Bultema, the Berean Church in Muskegon; Waalkes, The Church of the Open Door in Grand Rapids; and Bennink, the Bethel Gospel Tabernacle in Muskegon.

*Grace and Glory Days* follows the stormy careers of these strong-

willed, gifted heretics. Having split Calvary Reformed Church when he left to form Calvary Undenominational Church, DeHaan later nearly destroyed Calvary Undenominational Church by leaving it in order to found The Radio Bible Class. Determined not to submit to the Board that governed the church, DeHaan walked out of the congregation in the middle of a worship service:

On a Sunday morning in May of 1938 ... well before the end of the sermon with about 15 minutes left of radio time he announced that this was his last sermon in Calvary Undenominational Church, closed his Bible, took his hat from inside the pulpit, and proceeded up the aisle with a sobbing woman trying to take hold of him, and headed for the door (p. 88)

The book makes abundantly clear that independency is fraught with peril. It makes clear also that there are always ministers who find this church set-up appealing and that there are always people who will follow them, heedless of the peril.

Herman Hoeksema is mentioned as "one of Bultema's chief antagonists" at the CRC synod of 1918 that treated Bultema's case (p. 18). Hoeksema and Henry Danhof are characterized as "ultra-conservatives." Boslooper, a retired RCA minister, is mistaken in his history and confused in his theology (to say nothing of his grammar) when he writes that a cause of the founding of the Protestant Reformed Churches was the issue "whether or not Election took place before (Hoeksema) or after the Fall" (p. 113).

Certain incidents are memorable. There is Prof. Volbeda of Calvin Seminary coming to Bultema's church on the Sunday morning after Bultema's deposition in order to occupy the pulpit only to find the service well underway with Bultema doing the preaching. The consistory had decided to begin the service a half-hour early in order to forestall Volbeda. Bultema's sermon that morning, taken from John 9:34, was entitled, "And They Cast Him Out."

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# News From Our Churches

Mr. Benjamin Wigger

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## Young People's Activities

The thought crossed my mind just now that perhaps it would be a good idea to have a section of the "News" dealing with young people's activities.

There seem to be more and more activities each month. Why not give them their own section of this back page? So, without any further introduction, let us include a couple of young people's activities.

The Young People's Society of the Faith PRC in Jenison, MI contacted members of area PR churches to have them take part in an Apple Pie Phone-a-thon. Faith's society was selling fresh 9" deep-dish apple pies, by phone — with proceeds going, of course, to this year's '92 YP Convention.

The Young People's Society of the South Holland, IL PRC invited the young people of the two other PR churches in Illinois to join them for their annual ski-outing at Bittersweet, near Kalamazoo, Michigan.

The Hull, IA PRC's Young People's Society sponsored a singspiration on February 9 in their church. The theme for this singspiration was "God's Sovereignty in Salvation." Everyone in the area churches was invited to come and join in an evening of fellowship and in the singing of praise unto the God of our salvation.

On the evening of February 21, the young people of the Lynden, WA PRC invited their fellow church members to a Hostess Supper, followed by

a brief program. The proceeds of this evening were to be given to the church for the purpose of purchasing kitchen utensils.

## Evangelism Activities

The Evangelism Committee of the Peace PRC in Lynwood, IL writes concerning their activities that they "continue to distribute our Peace Church brochure and the Reformed Literature brochure. These two, along with copies of pages from Rev. Heys' Meditations are displayed in businesses, rest homes, and other places." And in the near future they plan to place an ad in "Christianity Today."

In a letter received from Jackson, MS by the Evangelism Committee of the South Holland, IL PRC, a correspondent writes, "I am a missionary on my way to Bogota, Columbia. There I will be trying to preach the biblical message in the face of Catholicism, and Pentecostalism. It would be a great help to me if I might receive a copy of the following of your helpful pamphlets...."

The Evangelism Committee of the Bethel PRC in Elk Grove Village, IL sponsored a lecture on "The Biblical Doctrine of Creation" by Rev. Dale Kuiper on February 26.

## Mission Activities

Rev. G. VanBaren, who recently completed a classical appointment to the Covenant Reformed Fellowship in Larne, Northern Ireland, wrote about his three weeks there to his congregation in Hudsonville, MI. He writes in part: "The CRF is meeting at present in a small Sunday School chapel in Ballymena. It is in an upstairs room which resembles a small church auditorium. Sunday School classes have been conducted in this room for about 150 years. It is adequate for the group. The benches are

of board; one for the seat and another for the back. These are functional but not designed for comfort — nor for sleeping, for that matter."

## Congregational Activities

On February 11, the congregation of the Kalamazoo, MI PRC met in a congregational meeting to consider whether or not they should sell their parsonage. Evidently no decision was reached that night and the matter was placed in the hands of a committee for further study.

The Council of the Peace PRC of Lynwood, IL reported to their congregation that, since approval of the purchase of the Lansing property, the Building Committee has been seeking permission from the city to construct a church building on the property. The committee has also been considering several matters which must be decided before plans can be drawn up. For instance: 1) the seating capacity of the auditorium; 2) the kind of structure the congregation can afford; and 3) whether to build the auditorium or a wing first.

A Potluck Lunch was planned by the Helping Hands Committee of the Faith PRC in Jenison, MI for all Faith's seniors and retirees.

A monthly church calendar will soon be included in the bulletins of the Lynden, WA PRC. These calendars will appear in the bulletin only of the last Sunday of each month and will serve to inform the congregation of birthdays, anniversaries, and important functions occurring the next month.

## Ministerial Calls

Rev. D. Kuiper has accepted the call he was considering to serve as pastor of the Southeast PRC in Grand Rapids, MI.

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



And as the result of voting on February 23 for missionary to the Covenant Reformed Fellowship of

Larne, Northern Ireland, the congregation of the calling church, the

Hudsonville, MI PRC, called Rev. Kortering. □

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The consistory and congregation of the Loveland Protestant Reformed Church express their heartfelt sympathy to Mr. and Mrs. Ray Ezinga and family in the death of her father,

**MR. JOHN HAGER.**

May the bereaved be comforted by the promise of God's Word that "... if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (II Cor. 5:1).

Rev. Ron Cammenga, Pres.  
Mr. Bob Brands, Clerk

### RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Mary Martha Society of the Redlands Congregation would like to express their Christian sympathy to their fellow members Anna Mae Meelker, Anna Bodbyl, Janine Meelker, and Karen Meelker and their families, in the death of their mother-in-law and grandmother

**MRS. HILDA MEELKER.**

May the family find comfort in God's Word, "For this God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death" (Psalm 48:14).

Pastor denHartog, President  
Laurie Jabaay, Secretary

### RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Mary Martha Society of the Redlands Congregation would like to express their Christian sympathy to their fellow members Donna Huiskens and Esther Huiskens and their families in the death of their father and grandfather,

**MR. HENRY VANDERBURG.**

May the family find comfort in God's Word, "I am the resurrection, and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live" (John 11:25).

Pastor denHartog, President  
Laurie Jabaay, Secretary

### RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Mary Martha Society of the Redlands Congregation would like to extend heartfelt Christian sympathy to our Pastor and his wife, Sherry denHartog and their family in the death of Sherry's uncle,

**MR. GEROLD DEUR.**

May they find comfort in the words of Isaiah 53:4, "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows."

Laurie Jabaay, Secretary

### CALL TO ASPIRANTS TO THE MINISTRY

All young men desiring to begin studies for the 1992-1993 academic year in the Theological School of the Protestant Reformed Churches should make application at the April 16, 1992 meeting of the Theological School Committee.

A testimonial from the prospective student's consistory that he is a member in full communion, sound in faith, and upright in walk, a certificate of health from a reputable physician, and high school and college transcripts must accompany the application. Before entering the seminary, all students must have earned a bachelor's degree and met all of the course requirements for entrance to the seminary. These entrance requirements are listed in the seminary catalog available from the school.

All applicants must appear before the Theological School Committee for interview before admission is granted. In the event that a student cannot appear at the April 16th meeting, notification of this fact, along with a suggested interview date, must be given to the secretary of the Theological School Committee before this meeting.

All correspondence should be directed to the Theological School Committee, 4949 Ivanrest Ave., Grandville, MI 49418.

Jon Huiskens, Secretary

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The Protestant Reformed Seminary admits students of any race, color, and national or ethnic origin.