

# *THE* **STANDARD BEARER**

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**A Reformed  
Semi-Monthly  
Magazine**

They are afflicted with SIDS.... The cause is the loss of the truth of the antithesis in these churches.... We may view this weakening of the antithesis as a spiritual virus. Let us call it ecclesiastical immunodeficiency virus (EIV). Within a few years it invariably leads to SIDS and to the death of the church.

See "The Gospel-Truth about Aids" — page 293

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Vol. 68, No. 13  
April 1, 1992

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## In This Issue...

AIDS we all know about, surely. But what in the world is SIDS?

Did you wonder about that when you read the cover copy? Already from the cover you will notice that, just as AIDS is caused by a virus (HIV), so also SIDS can be traced to a "virus" — EIV. And, further, that, just as the prognosis for AIDS is fatal, so also is the prognosis for SIDS.

Perhaps you've already put it all together. Regardless, you'll surely want to read Prof. Engelsma's penetrating analysis, not, so much, of the vile sin of homosexuality, as of the terrible state of the church which approves it. Such approval, he argues, is not just the cause of God's burning wrath against her, but the result of it. SIDS must be traced back to EIV. Page 293.

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Pursuant to the approval given by Synod 1991, the Theological School Committee has hired an architect "to do schematic design work on the proposed seminary building expansion," and has begun "collecting funds by special gifts." More detailed additional information will be supplied later; but, to give our readers a little preview, the TSC has provided us with a conceptual design, and Prof. Decker brings us up to date on the progress of the project in his letter from the seminary on page 302. As is to be expected, the prospect of new facilities is an exciting one for the committee, the faculty, and the students. Cause for a very special thrill, however, as the Rector also suggests, is, for all of us, the generosity with which the endeavor has been supported already at this stage. For an increase in the student body, we thank the Lord. Especially for that. But, for the wherewithal to build an addition to the seminary — we thank the Lord also for that. Who are we ... to deserve either?

\* \* \* \* \*

Question: Where is a science made of the study of the Scriptures? The Seminary, right? How about your home? Read, and consider carefully, "Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth."

D.D.

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The Business Office will accept standing orders for bound copies of the current volume. Such orders are filled as soon as possible after completion of a volume year.

16mm microfilm, 35mm microfilm and 105mm microfiche, and article copies are available through University Microfilms International.



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## Meditation

Rev. Wilbur Bruinsma

# A Prayer of Intercession

*And Moses returned unto the Lord, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin —; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written.*

Exodus 32:31, 32

It is a well-known Bible story: the golden calf. When the children of Israel observed that Moses delayed to come down out of Mt. Sinai, they approached Aaron. With the demand placed before him, "Up, make us gods which shall go before us," Aaron succumbed to a great and grievous sin. In spiritual weakness Aaron requested of the people their golden earrings which he, in turn, melted in the fire. As the gold cooled he fashioned it into an idol in the form of a calf. Why a calf? Most probably because the children of Israel were already, sad to say, familiar with the worship of Apis, the ox-god of the Egyptians. It was not strange, therefore, for the people to see this golden calf before them; neither were the sinful rites which they then practiced foreign to them. We learn from the Scriptural account that the people, with Aaron's help, celebrated a feast in honor of their gods, offering sacrifices to it. Then, to add sin upon sin, the children of Israel also danced naked together before it and "played together" to their shame.

The character of this sin stands on the foreground. The people were

not simply guilty of worshiping an image by which they thought to represent Jehovah. They had become guilty of idol worship: worshiping a god other than Jehovah. By their sin Israel as a whole had rejected Jehovah as their God, and revealed that they preferred the gods of the world — the gods of Egypt rather than Jehovah. This was a sin against the sovereign God of heaven and earth who had revealed Himself to Israel by a mighty and outstretched arm which had completely destroyed the land of Egypt before their very eyes. This sin was not, therefore, one of simple ignorance, but was out-and-out unbelief and rebellion!

It is evident from the words of Moses' prayer that he considered this sin of Israel as greater than any they had committed before. "Oh, this people hath sinned a great sin!" Moses even pulls up short of asking God to forgive their sin: "Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin —." But why was this sin of idol-worship any worse than the other sins Israel had committed? Had not Israel murmured and complained against God throughout their wilderness journey? Had she not accused God of leading her out into the wilderness in order to slay her? Had not Israel even before this time been guilty of worshiping the idol gods of Egypt? Why was this sin at Sinai so much greater than these other sins? Because of what had taken place a little over a month prior to this event. There, at Mt. Sinai, just before Moses went up into the mountain, Israel had become the covenant people of God! Moses had sprinkled them with the blood of the sacrifice. He had proclaimed to them: "Behold, the

blood of the covenant, which Jehovah hath made with you...."

In response Israel swore, not once, but twice, "All that Jehovah hath said we will do, and be obedient!" Now, about a month later, Israel had broken her solemn oath. She had sinned as Jehovah's covenant people, to whom so much had been revealed and promised!

Oh, how we mourn for Israel! No, not just for Israel then. But for Israel today too! We mourn for ourselves!

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*When we return  
to the idols of this  
wicked world ... we sin  
as those who have been  
given the revelation  
of our salvation  
in Jesus Christ!*

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Is our sin any different from Israel's sin? The church of Christ today has been incorporated into that same covenant of God in which Israel shared. God fellowships with us on the basis of the blood of Christ that has been sprinkled on us. In that blood we have been delivered from the bondage of sin. Our guilt has been covered and our iniquities cleansed away. We too have sworn before God that we will "lead a new, godly life."

When we return to the idols of this wicked world as did Israel, therefore, we too commit a great sin! It is not a sin of ignorance, mind you, as the sin of the heathen who have never heard of Christ. We sin as those who

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*Rev. Bruinsma is pastor of First Protestant Reformed Church in Holland, Michigan.*



have been given the revelation of our salvation in Jesus Christ! We sin as those who have shared in God's fellowship and have tasted of the benefits bestowed on us in Christ! When we then dance and sing and play with the idol gods of the wicked around us, then we become guilty before the God of heaven and earth who has chosen to place His name in our midst.

Certainly we can understand the need for the plea Moses makes to Jehovah in this prayer. "Oh, this people have sinned a great sin. Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin —; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written."

That prayer sends shivers down one's spine! What a man of compassion was Moses!

Moses knew what Israel had done. He knew also what they deserved for their sin! In fact, God had already told Moses that He would destroy the whole nation and make a new nation out of Moses' seed. Moses knew this. But as the shepherd of his sheep he had a deep love for them — as well as a deep love for God's covenant. And in that love Moses was willing to give up his own place in heaven for that people. Moses was willing to substitute not only his body, but his soul, on behalf of this nation! "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

And although we know, as did Moses, that it was impossible for his name to be erased from the book of life, nevertheless we can appreciate his plea. How many times have not we who are parents wished this when faced with an erring child? How often, too, a pastor can stand before the faces of his congregation and desire this. We know it is impossible, yet how often we with Paul can say (Rom. 9:3), "For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh."

But there is more revealed in this plea of Moses. In his request Moses reveals that he was fully aware of two great truths. First, he was aware of the awful reality of sin and its conse-

quences. "Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin...." He dare not say more. Could God forgive the sin of Israel? Was there any way possible to remove from the sight of God the horrible sin they had committed against the most high majesty of God? The only possible answer to such a weighty question was: God's justice had to be satisfied! The price had to be paid. And that meant for Israel eternal destruction in hell. Moses was aware of that.

This then led him to another great truth: the need for substitution. Moses knew that since Israel could not pay for her sin, someone else must. So Moses offered himself in the stead of the nation. What Moses did not understand, however, is that he could not be such a substitute. Moses was himself a sinner. If he were to suffer punishment for sin it would have to be for his own sins, not those of another. And, more, Moses was but a small, finite creature of the dust. Could he possibly bear the eternal weight of God's wrath against sin and ultimately pay the price of that sin? He would be crushed. Moses could not substitute himself. He was unacceptable.

But God did hear the plea of His servant, and Israel was spared.

No, not all Israel was spared. Those who were not God's chosen, those who therefore were hardened in their sin and refused to repent, perished in the wilderness. And, worse — those God blotted out of His book of life. But God's people in Israel were spared from the wrath of God.

Of course, Moses himself was not the reason or the ground for God's mercy toward Israel. It was the One whom Moses typified — Jesus Christ. In this prayer of intercession Moses becomes the perfect picture of Christ. How we need to hear that! We would despair in our own sin if not for that precious word of the Gospel! We need to hear of forgiveness just as well as Israel did. And this we find in the blood of the Lamb of God. Christ, our divine-human Mediator, substituted Himself in our stead. He went

the way of damnation and hell both in body and in soul. And in doing so He paid the price. Christ could do this because, unlike Moses, an imperfect type, Christ is the perfect reality. He had no sin of His own to pay for, as did Moses. Moreover, though Christ was a man, He yet remained God. He had the power to bear God's wrath and then live to bestow on others what He earned in His death. Christ, more willingly than would Moses have done so, laid down His life for His sheep.

Our sins are forgiven! Christ has accomplished that for us!

So much has He loved us. So much has God loved us. He spared not His only begotten Son to deliver us from sin and death! That is of greatest joy and comfort to us. Otherwise we would have no reason to bow upon bended knee and plead with God for forgiveness from day to day. God is gracious to forgive. Christ has given His life for us.

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends!" We thank God for His love! □

### Remember:

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subscription to the  
*Standard Bearer*  
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half-price —

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of good,  
Reformed  
reading!!

Do a friend  
a favor.



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## Editorially speaking...

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I remind our readers that bound volumes of the *Standard Bearer* are published and made available yearly. All 21 issues of the *SB* are bound in hard, handsome, black covers with the name and volume imprinted on the spine in gold letters. The latest volume has just come out. It contains the 504 pages of the *SB* from October 1, 1990 — September 15, 1991. Making the volume easy to use for research is the complete index to the entire volume that appears at the end. The index includes biblical texts, book reviews, titles, and subjects. The index is prepared by Judi Doezeema.

The cost is a mere \$12, a virtual steal. A limited number of copies are available. Write or call the business office of the *SB* for a copy.

Copies of some bound volumes of previous years are also available for the same price. Those interested should inquire of the business office.

If you desire to receive bound volumes in the future on a regular basis, inform us. This will assure you of receiving a copy.

Complete sets of bound volumes are in demand. If you have a complete set that you are willing to part with, or if you know of someone who

wants to get rid of a set, please inform us. We are in contact with persons, e.g., seminarians, who very much like to have the set and who will put the volumes to good use.

There is a shortage of individual copies of the *SB* prior to volume 40 (1963). We ask that those who may have such copies make them available to us for bound volumes. But *only* issues dated before 1963 are needed (or accepted).

The address and telephone number of the business office of the *SB* appear on the masthead. □

— DJE

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## Editorial

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# The Gospel-Truth about AIDS

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Only the gospel tells the truth about AIDS. The world in all its wisdom is ignorant. The worldly churches are lying.

AIDS (acquired immunodeficiency syndrome) is a disease that destroys the immune system of the body so that the body is defenseless against other diseases. It is a fatal disease. Because of its effects AIDS is an especially horrible way of dying. The virus that causes AIDS is known as HIV (human immunodeficiency virus). Everyone who is infected with HIV will die of AIDS in a few years. There is, at present, no cure for this disease. Nor is medical science promising a cure in the near future. Some doubt that a cure will ever be found.

AIDS kills mainly fornicators. The large majority of these fornicators

are homosexuals. Generally speaking, AIDS is the disease of homosexuals. The learned estimate is that 70% of the spread of HIV in the United States is sexual, all of it involving promiscuity and most of it homosexual. In 1987, 66% of the AIDS patients were homosexuals. Some 25% of the spread of HIV is due to the use of infected needles by drug users. (For these figures, I am dependent on Franklin E. Payne, Jr., M.D., in his informative book, *What Every Christian Should Know about the AIDS Epidemic: The Medical and Biblical Facts about AIDS*, Augusta, Georgia: Covenant Books, 1991. I recommend the book to those who would like a thorough description of AIDS, especially the medical aspects of AIDS.)

One pathetic feature of the trans-

mission of the disease is the passing of HIV to their unborn children by infected mothers.

The world regards AIDS as a merely natural, if mysterious, illness to be overcome by medical research and by safe sex. The solution is to throw billions of dollars (of the taxpayers' money) at the disease and condoms to the homosexuals. There is stubborn refusal to condemn homosexuality even as deviant behavior and a social evil. On the contrary, Western society in general and our nation in particular promote homosexuality as an acceptable, and even desirable, way of life by means of the entertainment media, sex education in the state schools, and the laws.

Many churches share the world's tolerance, and even approval, of ho-



homosexuality. They are afflicted with AIDS, that is, spiritual immunodeficiency syndrome. Their immunity to the world has been destroyed. They are now defenseless against the world's thinking and way of life, specifically now as regards homosexuality. The disease is fatal. The cause is the loss of the truth of the antithesis in these churches. There is no sense of the radical separation, difference, and warfare between world and church. For many churches, the antithesis is lost by the denial of predestination and by the proclamation of a saving love of God in Christ for all men without exception. For others, it is lost by the teaching of a common grace of God toward and in all men without exception. We may view this weakening of the antithesis as a spiritual virus. Let us call it ecclesiastical immunodeficiency virus (EIV). Within a few years it invariably leads to AIDS and to the death of the church.

The churches further advanced in apostasy decide synodically that homosexuality is a way of life for Christians that is pleasing to God, sanction homosexual relationships as the equivalent of marriage, and solemnly ordain practicing homosexuals into the office of the ministry of the gospel.

Other churches, in the beginning stages of AIDS, are more cautious in their acceptance of homosexuality. They are hesitant about homosexual practice, but refuse to condemn as sinful homosexual inclination, or "orientation." Even as regards homosexual practice, they are obviously unable to pass upon it a sharp, unqualified, absolute judgment of condemnation. They suggest that there is an important distinction between promiscuous and "monogamous" homosexual practices. Scripture is not altogether clear on the issue of homosexual practice. Scripture alone is not decisive to settle the question, whether homosexual practice is permissible for church members. Various aspects of contemporary culture must also be taken into account as authoritative. You will not hear from these churches that the

wrath of God burns against the impenitent homosexuals who are dying of AIDS. Rather you will hear that the church must love these people and show compassion to them.

Such are the Reformed churches in the Reformed Ecumenical Council (REC). Included in the Council is the GKN (the Reformed Churches in The

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or even tolerate,  
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Netherlands). This denomination has approved homosexual practice on the part of its members. In its infamous report, "Homophilia," that is, "Homosexuality," the General Synod of the GKN, Bentheim, 1981 spoke of "many sincere Christian homophiles."

This year the REC considers a "Report on Hermeneutics and Ethics." The report was occasioned by the GKN's acceptance of homosexuality. The report refuses to condemn homosexuality on the basis of the clear testimony of Holy Scripture. Scripture alone is not decisive. Scripture is not clear on homosexuality. "General revelation" also must be allowed to have an authoritative voice in deciding whether homosexuality is permissible Christian behavior. And this "general revelation," which is nothing other than the modern (homosexual) culture, has authority (the report assures us) because of God's "common grace": "Also in ethical questions special revelation cannot be isolated from general revelation, and special grace cannot be isolated from common grace" (p. 20).

On the most charitable reading, the report advises the churches of the REC to be open to the approval of certain homosexual relationships as godly behavior. "Special attention should be given to the facts supporting the claim that distinctions should be made between promiscuous and

faithful relations, etc." (p. 24) In principle, the report sanctions homosexuality.

The churches that approve, or even tolerate, homosexuality in the name of the Christ of Scripture are lying. As the apostle foretold, they are "deceiving and being deceived" (II Tim. 3:13).

The gospel of Christ as revealed in Holy Scripture judges homosexuality as sin. According to II Timothy 1:10,11, defiling oneself with mankind is lawlessness and disobedience. It is "contrary to sound doctrine, according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God." I Corinthians 6:9,10 excludes impenitent homosexuals, with other sinners, from the kingdom of God: "Be not deceived ... (neither) effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind ... shall inherit the kingdom of God."

Not only is homosexual practice sin, but also homosexual lust, or inclination, or orientation, is sin. The gospel's indictment of the sinner does not condemn only the deed but also the sinner's very nature. The tree itself is corrupt, and, therefore, it produces corrupt fruit (Matt. 7:15-20). If a man so much as looks at another man to lust after him, he is guilty of heart-homosexuality (cf. Matt. 5:27,28).

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*The nation legalizes it,  
protecting it by law.  
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The gospel judges homosexuality to be an especially vile sin. It is this because it is contrary to the will of God the Creator made known in creation itself. It is unnatural. It represents a confusion of the order of creation. It is perverse. "... vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one to-



ward another; men with men working that which is unseemly ..." (Rom. 1:26, 27a).

AIDS is the manifestation of the holiness of God against the abomination of homosexuality and the expression of the wrath of God against homosexuals. "...and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet" (Rom. 1:27b). Nor is the spread of AIDS throughout the non-homosexual populace any proof to the contrary. The entire society tolerates homosexuality. Our Western culture is permeated with the wickedness by means of television, movies, music, and magazines. The nation legalizes it, protecting it by law. The whole society, therefore, is justly exposed to the consequences. As for the pathetic infection of unborn children, God visits the iniquity of the fathers and mothers upon their children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate Him (Ex. 20:5).

This is the gospel-truth about AIDS.

The message of the gospel, therefore, to the homosexual is, "Repent of your abominable sin, or perish under the wrath of God, temporally in AIDS and eternally in hell, which is far worse." To every homosexual who

repents of his sin in the fear of God, the gospel grants pardon and the sure hope of life eternal, for the sake of the cross of Christ. Homosexuality is not an unpardonable sin.

In light of the gospel-truth about AIDS, the message of the gospel to the saints is that we come out, spiritually, from the perishing world in which we live. This means that we abhor, renounce, and flee from homosexuality, whether in ourselves or in others. There is power in the blood and Spirit of Jesus to accomplish this, also for the child of God who may have a tendency and lust toward the same sex (cf. I Cor. 6:9-11). The ruling elders must discipline members who live impenitently in the sin.

Those Christians presently in churches that are so advanced in EIV that they cannot sharply condemn homosexuality but rather declare themselves open to it must come out of those churches. They must not come out next year, or even tomorrow, but today. The call is urgent in the extreme. "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" (Rev. 18:4).

For the wrath of God is burning against such a church. It is not burn-

ing *because* the church approves homosexuality. But the approval of homosexuality is itself due to the wrath of God upon this church.

The gospel-truth about AIDS is by no means merely that the disease is the divine punishment of homosexuality. But homosexuality itself — the unbridled lust, the bold practice, and the glorifying of it — is God's judgment upon a people that has held under the truth about God in unrighteousness. This was what homosexuality was in inglorious Greece and in lawless Rome, that only held under the truth that is revealed in creation. This is all the more the case for a civilization, and especially a church, that perverts the truth revealed in the gospel of the Scripture. "For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections ..." (Rom. 1:26).

In the gospel-truth about AIDS, the true church hears the call to be faithful to the gospel of the grace and glory of God in Jesus Christ and to preach it without shame. For in it alone is life. Apart from it, the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men and women.

The gospel saves from AIDS. □

— DJE

## Letters

### ● Simpson Publishing Company ...

It was good to see *The Plan of Salvation* reviewed in the February 15 edition of the *Standard Bearer*. Thank you for the synopsis, notation of the questionable views, and warm commendation. I do agree with you with respect to the order of the decrees. My personal conviction is that both are true. I am a "supra/infralapsarian"! Both views emphasize certain aspects of scriptural truth. Do not both Adam and Christ pre-suppose one another? God's decrees are inscrutable.

Thank you for considering our publications for review in your periodical. It is our earnest prayer that God will bless and use these publications for the furtherance of Christ's glory in His church.

David P. Simpson  
Publisher, Simpson Publishing Co.  
Boonton, NJ

### ● ...and Its Address

In the *Standard Bearer* of February 15 appears a review of the book by B.B. Warfield, *The Plan of Salvation*. I would like to purchase this book but do not know the address of the pub-

lisher. Can you help me with this?

Fred Ennema  
Wisconsin Rapids, WI

### Response

Warfield's *The Plan of Salvation* is published by Simpson Publishing Company:

338 West Main Street  
P.O. Box 699

Boonton, NJ 07005. □

—Ed.



# All Around Us

Prof. Robert Decker

## ● CHRIST IN HOLLYWOOD<sup>1</sup>

"Christ can be found in Hollywood, and without having to view only such films as 'Oh, God' or 'Last Temptation of Christ.' His trail can be seen in movies such as 'Superman,' 'Star Wars' and 'E. T., the Extra-terrestrial,' says film critic Roy M. Anker."

Anker, an English professor at Calvin College, recently lectured at Third Christian Reformed Church in Kalamazoo about what he considers good and bad in the movies. Anker, according to the newspaper, "minced no words in talking about what was bad at the movies ... but appeared most interested in talking about what was good at the movies." George Lucas' "Star Wars" trilogy is a "profoundly Christian saga that shows the spiritual journey of a wanderer who comes to believe in a positive supernatural power," Anker said.

Anker described the alien figure of "E. T." as a "Christ figure." He claims that when E.T. dies in the movie, "there's an ascension scene and a bit of a halo around his head."

According to the newspaper, "The movie 'Superman' is rated first on Anker's good movie list. He sees this movie as a retelling of the Christ story. 'There's Brando. Looks like

God, doesn't he? He even talks like God,' Anker joked while playing a scene from the beginning of the movie."

"Eyes in the audience widened as the super boy was thrust out to space from the exploding Krypton and Brando's voice boomed, 'I will always be with you, my only son.'"

"'Only son' — that's Jesus plain and simple, Anker said.

"Then the boy lands on earth in Kansas. Anker described Kansas as 'the Biblical equivalent of Nazareth — it's in the boonies .... 'These fables can teach us something, us church folks, about what it's like to meet the incarnation,' Anker said.

"The movie, 'Places in the heart' is so profoundly Christian 'it will knock your socks off,' Anker said."

The article goes on to point out that Anker does not consider the movie "Last Temptation of Christ" as blasphemous. The newspaper quoted Anker as saying, "Instead of a mamby pamby Jesus who's way up there, we have a human Jesus, perhaps much too human for some."

Fifty or sixty years ago movies were considered dead wrong in the Reformed tradition. Consistories disciplined those who refused to cease attending movies. It happened more than once in those years that pre-seminary students who were caught attending the movie theatre were barred from the seminary and the ministry.

Then we were told that because of "common grace" there was some good in movies. The people of God were called to "redeem the film arts."

Now, if there is as much good in the movies as Anker claims, why bother trying to redeem them? There is no need!

There is one simple test to apply to movies as well as to all of life. It's

found in Holy Scripture, in Romans 14:23, "... whatsoever is not of faith is sin."

*Kalamazoo Gazette*

## ● THE WORLD AT WAR

It would appear that President George Bush's dream of a "new world order" will not be realized in the near future. Currently there is war in thirty-two countries of the world. In the Americas there are Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, and Peru; in Asia: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Israel, Lebanon, Burma, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, and Sri Lanka; in Europe: Turkey, United Kingdom, Yugoslavia, and many of the countries that made up the former Soviet Union; in Africa: Angola, Chad, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Liberia, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia, Somalia, Sudan, and Western Sahara.

In most of these countries it is civil and revolutionary war. Guerilla forces are in revolt against the established governments. Many of these countries, Ethiopia and Western Sahara for example, are in the throes of severe drought and famine. Thousands are dying daily from lack of food and even minimal health care. According to figures released by the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization and the Worldwatch Institute based in Washington, D. C., there are severe food shortages in East Africa and Iraq and elsewhere. The reasons for this are: the largest one-year drop ever in the world grain harvest, higher prices, and deeper poverty. The UN claims there are 500 million people underfed and at least 24 countries are short of food.

Observing all this we are reminded of the words of Jesus, "And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of

<sup>1</sup> I am indebted to Miss Berdena Rust, a member of the Protestant Reformed Church in Kalamazoo, Michigan, for sending me the press clipping from the *Kalamazoo Gazette*.

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



wars ... and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows" (Matthew 24:6-8). Jesus also told us that when we hear of these things we, "... must not be troubled: for all these things must come to pass ..." (Matthew 24:6). They *must* come to pass because they are determined by Almighty God as signs of the coming of Christ and of the end of the world (Matthew 24:3).

*Pulse*

## ● THE EVANGELICAL CHURCH IN SPAIN

The Evangelical churches in Spain have had a tough time of it ever since the victory of General Francisco Franco in the Spanish Civil War of 1936-1939. Franco worked hard to crush his enemies, including Protestants. Churches were shut down, Bibles and Christian literature confiscated, and evangelism was forbidden.

All this could change in the near future. The Spanish national parliament, the Cortes, is considering legislation that would grant new religious rights to the nation's Protestant Christians. The proposed legislation, called the Accords of Cooperation between the Spanish State and the Federation of Evangelical Entities of Spain, gives official status to Protestant churches

in such areas as taxation, professional ministry, and education.

Of Spain's 39 million people only 71,000 are evangelicals.

*Christianity Today*  
*Covenantal Witness*

## ● CHURCH CALLS HOMOSEXUAL MINISTER

A test case on homosexual ministers is moving through the courts of the Presbyterian Church (USA). A church in Rochester, New York, called Jane Spahr to be its pastor. Spahr was ordained before she openly acknowledged that she was homosexual. She is 49 years old, divorced, the mother of two children, and now living in a "committed" relationship with another woman.

The Rochester church has survived the first challenge to her call. The challenge was based on a ruling of the 1978 General Assembly that said homosexuals could not be ordained. The church believes that condition was met since Spahr was ordained before she acknowledged her homosexuality. Officials of the Rochester church say they called Spahr because she was the best qualified and most wonderful candidate for the job. In the meantime Spahr cannot be installed until the challenges are complete. That may take another year.

As long as churches continue to refuse to maintain the clear teaching of Holy Scripture this problem will remain.

*REC News Exchange*

## ● JIMMY SWAGGART STILL IN TROUBLE

The IRS placed tax liens on Swaggart's and his family's earnings, demanding \$346,511 for taxes, interest, and penalties owed for 1985 and 1986. In addition Meredith Corp., a broadcaster in Fairfield, Kansas, won a court judgment of \$34,358 against Jimmy Swaggart Ministries (JSM). Other broadcasters have cases pending.

Frances Swaggart, Jimmy's wife, told reporters that the ministry had suffered a \$1.5 million deficit the last quarter of 1991 but that "we are slowly regaining" the TV stations JSM had lost. She also said that her husband had become a changed man since October (when his latest scandal involving a prostitute was publicized). "Our home is different, our marriage is different, everything is different," she said.

We'll see. Even apart from the heresy (Swaggart is a Pentecostal) Jimmy Swaggart lacks key qualifications for the ministry (cf. I Timothy 3:2 and 7). God is not mocked. □

*National & International Religion Report*

## Guest Article

*Pastor Lau Chin Kwee*

# Training of Our Own Ministers\*

*Rev. Lau is pastor of the First Evangelical Reformed Church of Singapore.*

\* His article is the abbreviated text of the keynote address given at a program arranged by the Theological Training Committee of the ERCS.

Beloved people of God, this is a very significant gathering of the members of our two churches to reflect on this very important matter of the training of our own ministers. We can all see and understand that the growth of our churches calls for more laborers in this harvest field. And all this has to do with the training of men. If we put unworthy men in these places, then we should expect an unworthy

harvest. We may be small in number, but if this small group of people can understand and are faithful to uphold this work, I am sure our Lord will prosper our churches in days to come.

Our Lord Jesus is pleased to care for His church in this world through the labors of His "prophets, priests, and kings." This is exemplified in our individual exercise of this threefold



office of all believers as well as in the labor of our pastors, elders, and deacons. Any attempt to emphasize one of these three aspects of Christ's ministry at the expense of any of the other two would bring great harm to the Body of Christ. This having been said, we must not fail to see that the Lord would have the pastor carry the standard as His army gathers and marches into battle. When the Lord wrote to the seven churches in Revelation, He wrote to their angels or messengers, the pastors who spoke on their behalf. Getting the right men

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into this office is therefore a very important thing. Who can dispute this truth that the best pastor is one raised up from among the flock, taught and trained in the same environment as the sheep? If for some reason a church is unable to do that herself, she should look at other ways of getting her pastors. But she must realize that these other ways are at best second best. Meanwhile, she should always aspire to be able to train men from her midst to serve as pastors. All members of our churches should support this work by their means and prayers. Those who are mature enough to know the importance of these things should share with and help other members to see the importance of this aspect of the work of the church.

The Head of the church, our Lord Jesus, was the One who instructed His disciples to pray for laborers in Matthew 9:37, 38. "Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest." Sending laborers into the harvest field is the Lord's business. He has clearly revealed to us

that He is pleased to do that in answer to our prayers for them. So we see that He wants the church to be actively involved in this whole matter of His sending laborers into His harvest field. Those who pray will be used by the Lord in this process of getting laborers into the field.

The Old Testament is full of examples of men of God training other men for the work. The most well-known one is, of course, Elijah training Elisha. In fact, there are evidences of schools of the prophets in the Old Testament era (see II Kings 2:3-15). The word "sons," in this passage, must not be taken to mean the blood children of these prophets. Rather they are the students training to be prophets. Notice that these were adults who evidently knew about the coming departure of Elijah to heaven. They were men interested in prophecies. Notice also that they were men from different places. What training must have been going on in those days.

Our Lord Himself and the apostles had their companions who walked with them, helped and supported them as they went from place to place to preach the gospel. These, undoubtedly, were their students under training. Paul wrote to recommend his students very often in his epistles. The Pastoral Epistles were letters written to students who were by then pastors of churches. The Lord would have men trained for the ministry. And He would use imperfect men to perform this task. Therefore as churches we should be very interested in this matter of training.

Knowing that it is the Lord's will that men be trained by other men within the church before they are sent forth to minister among God's people, we should not now resort to mystical guidance, calling, and training of men for the ministry. I have heard testimonies of so-called great men of God and their strange experiences of how the Lord visited them and how they read through the Bible within a short period of time, and how special enlightenment was given to them, as if they received divine inspiration and

instruction from the Lord. They talk about this as if to give themselves greater credentials and authority to preach and to guide God's people. And sometimes God's people are so naive as to think that nobody is worthy to preach the Word of God unless he has some kind of mystical experience with God. Only by virtue of those mystical experiences are they qualified to minister God's Word. How often people are deceived in this way. The cults and leaders of cults have all kinds of testimony concerning their strange experiences. But, beloved, that ought not to be for us as people of God. Our churches should never allow ourselves to degenerate into a state where the mystical experiences of a man become a deciding factor for admission into the ministry. The normal, sensible, spirit-filled rule of our elders should always control the admission of men to the ministry. God would have us harness our whole being, including our mind, for His service. We may not resort to mysterious things which cannot be verified and confirmed, no matter how very glamorous and exciting they may be. This is too dangerous for the church. Many a church has been led astray as a result of this methodology of getting men for the ministry.

Before the elders call a man to the ministry, they would be interested to know the background of the training of such a man. This would mean that they should be well in-



*Pastor Lau Chin Kwee*



formed of the historical background of the different seminaries in this world. In this way they are able to size up a candidate for the ministry quickly and, in the examination of the candidates, deal with pertinent doctrinal matters, from the knowledge of the background of his training. Good and faithful elders would want to do that for the good of the church. They do not want to see the church thrown into chaos and confusion as a result of getting the wrong men into the ministry. They would certainly want to have a say as to which seminary a potential minister ought to be trained in. These are faithful elders who do not fool around with the truth of God's Word. Since the Truth is eternal, to them there is no such thing as trying to improve on the Truth that was delivered to them in the Word of God. If our churches have the capability, our elders would certainly long to see our own school started and continued in this part of the world. If we do not have the capability, the elders should wisely look for viable alternatives.

The ERCS are blessed in that we have a sister relationship with the Protestant Reformed Churches in America (PRC). The PRC are stable churches, good in their doctrinal position (I can say that from my heart, having read their magazine, the *Standard Bearer*, and been trained in their Seminary). There is no perfect church in this world, and the PRC are not an exception; neither do they claim to be perfect. There are, however, few denominations these days that are as consistent and harmonious in their different churches, as faithful in the training of their men for the ministry, and as able to expound the Word of God as the PRC. We must be very thankful that the Lord in His providence, and in the history of our churches, has led us to establish contact with the PRC; that we received help from them from the beginning; and that they so graciously did not lord over us but willingly organized us as an independent Reformed church, not under their control, but yet always maintaining that good,

close, caring sisterly relationship with us. These are good churches who genuinely love and care for us. When they sense danger ahead of us, they would faithfully write to warn us. This relationship must be appreciated and not be thoughtlessly allowed to turn sour. The Protestant Reformed Churches are big enough to have their own seminary. They have men who are capable of instructing others. Here is a viable alternative for us. We do not have our own school now, but we do have a very good school in the Protestant Reformed Seminary to send our men for training.

Being trained intellectually for the ministry is one thing. Being trained practically is another. Our elders, therefore, must see to it that a man aspiring for the ministry be trained practically as well, before declaring him eligible for a call to be a pastor in our churches. Although our first two pastors lack such practical training, we should not now neglect to provide this for our future students. The PR Seminary has a four-year training program, one semester of which is an internship, with emphasis on the practical aspects of the ministry. So we should see to it that our students are not just trained to be intellectually capable, but also are prepared practically for the particular place where they will serve as pastors. In our context, such students should be attached to our local pastors for their internship.

When our church was only one congregation this process was much simpler, as only one Board of Elders was involved. But now that we have two congregations, the whole idea of denominational responsibility in this area becomes a reality. It would be foolish and a mistake to let each individual congregation be responsible for its own training and calling of men to the ministry. While we believe in the autonomy of the local churches, we must also appreciate what is involved in sisterly relationships. In this relationship there are privileges and obligations arising out of our meaningful fellowship. We have the mutual benefits of transfer of mem-

bers and the exchange of pulpits. It is an error if each congregation is allowed to train her own men in her own way, after her own likings, and to call men to the ministry without a denominational, united agreement on the matter. This would not only be a wastage and an unwise use of manpower, but would also lead to polarization of our churches and even, finally, to division at the highest level of church life. Other advantages in a united effort are the provision of the best teachers in the denomination to teach, and of a denominational student aid fund to support students from smaller congregations. In this way even the smaller congregations can feel that they are part and parcel of the denomination.

Our Classis was right to set up the Theological Training Committee to look into this common area of labor for the unity of our churches. This committee also has the mandate to look into the further training of our present ministers. As this whole area is quite new in our churches we can expect much improvement in the years to come as we labor on. But what the leaders are aware of and are doing must be made known to the ordinary members.

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*... this whole idea  
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Finally, it must be pointed out that this whole idea of training our own ministers cannot work without the support of our members. The Great Commission of our Lord cannot be carried out without the church sending forth laborers into the harvest field. The church is not just the elders. She also includes the ordinary members. In fact, it is only when these members, trusting in the leadership of the elders, support the various projects put forth, actively and zealously, that we can see the advancement of the church. The whole church must move together, even in this area



of training men for the ministry. We must not imagine that we can just leave our elders to take care of these matters. We must all with one heart and one mind agree that this is important. For this reason of getting our members involved, we have organized this time of reflection. All of us present should see it as our duty to share with those absent what we have heard today and encourage them to support the work of the TTC.

When we think of sending our brother Fook Meng to the States for training we also immediately become aware that the Lord must touch the hearts of our members to give towards this training. When we think of our own school here in the future, again we think that students will also have to come from among the members. Beloved, this work cannot func-

tion well without the involvement of our ordinary members. We must never think that there is not enough work in our churches to think of having more workers. As it takes time to train a man, we should start training them already, even if we cannot see any immediate work for such a man. It was our Lord who said that the harvest is great and the laborers are few. He cannot be wrong. If we have extra workers we would want to send them forth as missionaries to spread the glorious gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ to regions untouched. We may not always be able to see clearly what lies ahead of us, but if the Lord calls us, we cannot escape, but must serve Him. If it is the Lord who calls; He will certainly have a place for us to serve Him in. We must learn to act by faith in His Word.

As members of the church, you can certainly pray for this difficult labor. Prayer is real, and the Lord Himself has given the assurance of answering our prayers for more laborers. So besides financial support, why not be involved also in this area of prayer? Our students are not going to do well, and money is not going to come in for this ministry, if we are not going to pray earnestly and persistently for this work. We covet your prayers.

The training of our own ministers, beloved, is the direction that the Lord gives us in His Word. Our elders, knowing this, are doing what they can in this area. You must support this work now for the well-being and unity of our churches, and the glory and praise of our God in the face of Jesus Christ, His Son. □

## Day of Shadows

Rev. John Heys

# Saved By Grace

They were different.

Jacob and Esau, the sons of Isaac, were physically but also spiritually so very different from each other.

The physical difference is presented in Genesis 25:25, where we read, concerning Esau: "And the first came out red, all over like a hairy garment." Then in the next verse we read: "And after that came his brother out, and his hand took hold on Esau's heel." There is nothing in that verse that suggests that Jacob was like Esau physically. Jacob was not red and hairy.

But what was also revealed some time later, when these twin brothers were young men, is that there was a tremendous spiritual difference between them. The one represented God's church, and the other repre-

sented the godless world. Esau represented the antichristian kingdom of Satan, while Jacob represented the coming kingdom of Christ. Esau represented the seed of the serpent, and Jacob represented the seed of the woman.

And we do well to translate that promise of God found in Genesis 3:15 to read thus: "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall crush (not merely bruise) thy head, and thou shalt crush his heel."

We do well to bear in mind that both the seed of the woman (that is, the elect) and the seed of the serpent (the reprobate) by God's providence came out of Eve. It pleased God also to make Jacob a believer, but He left Esau in his totally depraved nature. These twins were different in that Jacob was an elect by God's grace, and Esau had only a spiritually dead nature. In Romans 9:13 we read, "As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated."

We do, however, read in Genesis 27 that Jacob did walk in sin. The child of God does that because he has an old man of sin all through this life. We find him, Jacob, deceitfully making his father think that he is Esau, so that he can get the inheritance through a blessing his father would place upon him. He, Jacob, "had skins of kids of the goats upon his hands, and upon the smooth of his neck" (Gen. 27:15, 16). Jacob wanted his father to think that he was Esau. What a deceitful act! What a clear breaking of the ninth commandment of God's law! Clearly Jacob revealed that he had an old man of sin in him. Plainly the Heidelberg Catechism teaches us that Jacob had only a "small beginning" of obedience (Lord's Day XLIV). And a child of God must die physically in order to be delivered from his old man of sin. In that way our God delivers His elect child from the evil nature he received through fallen Adam. No wonder Paul says in Philippians 1:21, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

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



Yes, for the child of God death is not a loss but a gain.

Note also that what we read in the following verses is true about our old sinful natures which we keep until we die. In Psalm 51:5 we read, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." In Job 14:4 we find this good question: "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one." In John 3:3 Jesus teaches us that, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of heaven." That means that he cannot then want it either. Listen to what our God says through Paul in Romans 5:12: "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin: and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."

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*The truth we must hold on to  
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All this being true, how dare we say that man is saved by accepting Christ, and by deciding by his own power to let God save him? Does man let God do something? Does a spiritually dead man cause God to depend upon him? In Psalm 58:3 we read: "The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies." And so correctly we sing from our *Psalter*: "All that I am I owe to Thee, Thy wisdom, Lord, hath fashioned me" (#383:1). God does not plead with us and in that sense offer us salvation. He does not wait to see whether we will accept it or not, before He causes us to be born again. God does not offer salvation. He does not invite us to come and get it. Before He gives us salvation, by a rebirth, we do not want it. Yes, we do want to be saved from hell and its torments. Even the devil wants that. But unless we want deliverance from a sinful nature, we have not been born again, and we do not want

the salvation Christ earned for us. The truth we must hold on to and maintain is that we do not want salvation until God has already begun it in us.

Do we not find God stating to Satan, and thus to fallen Adam and Eve, this: "I will put enmity between thee and the woman"? Satan already hated Adam, whom God created in His image, that is, as a faithful servant of God. But, now that Satan got Adam to hate God, our gracious God informs Satan that He will cause Adam to hate Satan. Our God there declares that HE will make spiritually alive Adam and Eve, who had died spiritually a few moments before by eating what God forbade them to eat.

Being spiritually dead, Adam and Eve did not run unto God in order to confess their sin and sorrow. Dead men cannot do that. Nay, Adam and Eve *ran away* from God! They tried to hide themselves from Him. And that revealed spiritual death.

Yes, our God calls us to repent and believe. But that is a command, and not a request, a suggestion, a plea. His name is Jehovah, which means I AM. That name declares I AM GOD! And He decides all things. He as God determines who will be saved, and therefore to whom He will give faith by means of a new life which He will give. We must not claim that in Revelation 3:20 Christ says that He is knocking on the door of man's heart. That word heart is not in the letter to the Laodiceans. He is knocking on the door of the church that is lukewarm, because it is led by Satan; and Christ is not preached in that church. Yes, His name may be, and no doubt was, mentioned — but not as the Christ as God's Word presents Him. He here is calling to the believers in that church, and commanding them to get Him preached again on their pulpit.

Thus Jacob did not obtain that birthright blessing of which his father spoke because he did the right thing. He did the wrong things. He lied and deceived his father. And yet our God, through Isaac, did promise Jacob covenant blessings. And by implication

here, Isaac declared that Esau would not get those blessings.

We must maintain the truth of Scripture that we are saved by grace, and not by our works. Salvation is one hundred per cent God's gift, including the desire for it. According to Ephesians 2:8-10 we are HIS workmanship, created in Christ. What man and what creature was created because he asked for it? What dead man ever asked a physician to make him alive? We read that we are created UNTO good works, not because we performed that good work of wanting salvation. We are GOD'S workmanship, created in Christ Jesus. We do not want salvation until God has begun it in us.

The almighty, sovereign God never, no never, asks us to do something. As God, He always commands! He does not depend upon us for the fulfillment of His eternal counsel — it would not even be eternal, if we first have to do something — but we depend upon Him, and desire salvation only after He has begun it in us by causing us to be born again. Even as we did nothing about the decision to be born physically, or did any of that work, we do nothing for our salvation until God has begun it in us, and has given us the desire and power to do it. God did not then bless Jacob instead of Esau because of what Jacob did. He, Jacob, sinned! He lied! What he did called for punishment in hell! Esau was furious and wanted to kill Jacob. God said that the wages of sin is death; and Jacob surely deserved that punishment, not covenant blessings.

In the day of shadows we see what God is going to do in His grace. Not only in Genesis 3:15, that mother promise, but also throughout the whole Old Testament, we have a shadow of Christ's coming. The day of shadows reveals to us what Adam and Eve did after they died spiritually. It also reveals what our God does in His grace, not offers to do if dead men will first do something.

Let us, then, as we read and hear the gospel preached, look carefully at what God wrought, and is doing for



us today. Let us look for Christ to come as God's gift, and for His leading us into that of which the garden of Eden was a shadow, namely, the shadow of the new Jerusalem with all its blessedness. The almighty God does not wait to see whether we will "accept" Christ. He causes every elect child of God to be born again, and in that way begin to have the desire for salvation.

Salvation is not merely the deliverance from the punishment of sin. It is that work of God's grace whereby He causes us to hate sin, and to desire life and strength that is pleasing in His sight. Salvation not only gives us deliverance from the punishment we deserve, it gives us what we do not deserve, and thus away from the evil,

the devilishness we walk in and by nature enjoy.

When Esau came back with that venison which his father requested, and Isaac realized the sin of his son Jacob, he, Isaac, also realized that he was wrong in choosing Esau for that birthright blessing. It is true that Esau was born first; but now Isaac clearly saw that God had chosen Jacob, and that the blessing pronounced upon him might not be declared to be Esau's. Even though he knew that Jacob lied, and committed that sin, he, Isaac, did not even want to withdraw that promise from Jacob and put it on Esau. He believed and accepted the truth that we are saved by grace, and therefore get salvation, even though we deserve damnation.

In the day of shadows, salvation by grace was clearly revealed here. Jacob did not deserve the smallest part of its blessings. And we, likewise, do not deserve the smallest part of salvation. By grace we are saved. Yes, we are saved through faith; but that faith is not of ourselves. It is the gift of God. Praise Him from whom ALL blessings flow, including the desire for it.

That God forgives our debts means that He gives us the opposite of what we deserve. He not only takes away our guilt and its punishment. He gives us the love of God Christ earned for us. Satan wrought in man enmity against God. In His grace God wrought in us love for Himself as a free gift of His grace. □

## Protestant Reformed Seminary

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Robert D. Decker, Rector

Professor of Practical Theology and New Testament

March 10, 1992

*Dear Brothers and Sisters in our Lord:*

*Under God's blessing we are having a profitable year at the seminary. The students are doing well in their studies. In addition to our own four students, it is our privilege to instruct two students from the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Australia. These men and their families have adjusted well to our school and churches. In addition to their teaching responsibilities, the professors are kept busy preaching and teaching in our churches.*

*We expect to enroll a young man from our Lynden, Washington congregation next fall. The churches in Singapore are planning, D.V., to enroll one of their students in the fall of 1993. A man from Mexico may be enrolling in the fall of 1992. Our student body is taking on an international flavor. We are thankful to God for giving us the privilege of training men for the gospel ministry in other denominations.*

*Progress is being made on the plans to expand the building. We need more space for our growing library, a quiet area for students to do their research, a room for the archives of our churches, and offices for the professors. An architect has been hired and plans and cost estimates will be presented to synod in June. A sketch of the plan appears on the next page. The architect gave us a figure of \$350,000.00 as a rough estimate of the cost of this addition. To date we have received approximately \$105,000.00 from individuals and churches for this project. Of this amount \$80,000.00 has come from three individuals who are not members of our churches. This kind of support from our people and other of God's people is very encouraging. We ask that you remember this need as you contribute to the cause of God's Kingdom. Your donations should be sent to the undersigned at the seminary address.*

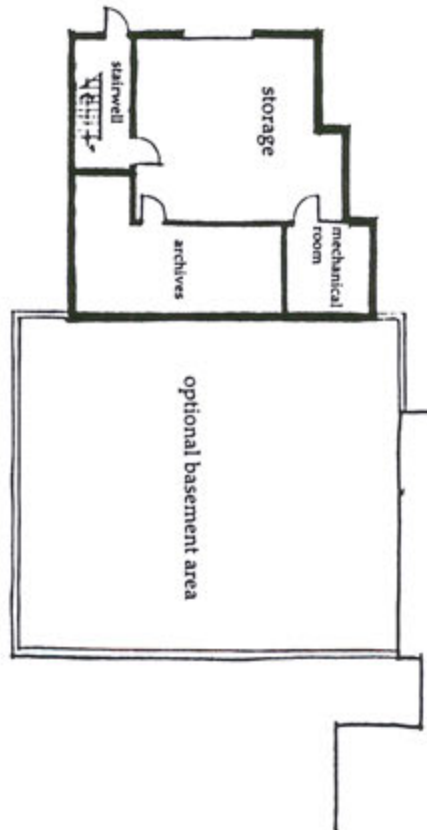
*Please remember the seminary in your prayers that we may be diligent in preparing faithful men for the gospel ministry in our churches and mission fields.*

*Cordially in Christ,  
Prof. Robert D. Decker, Rector*

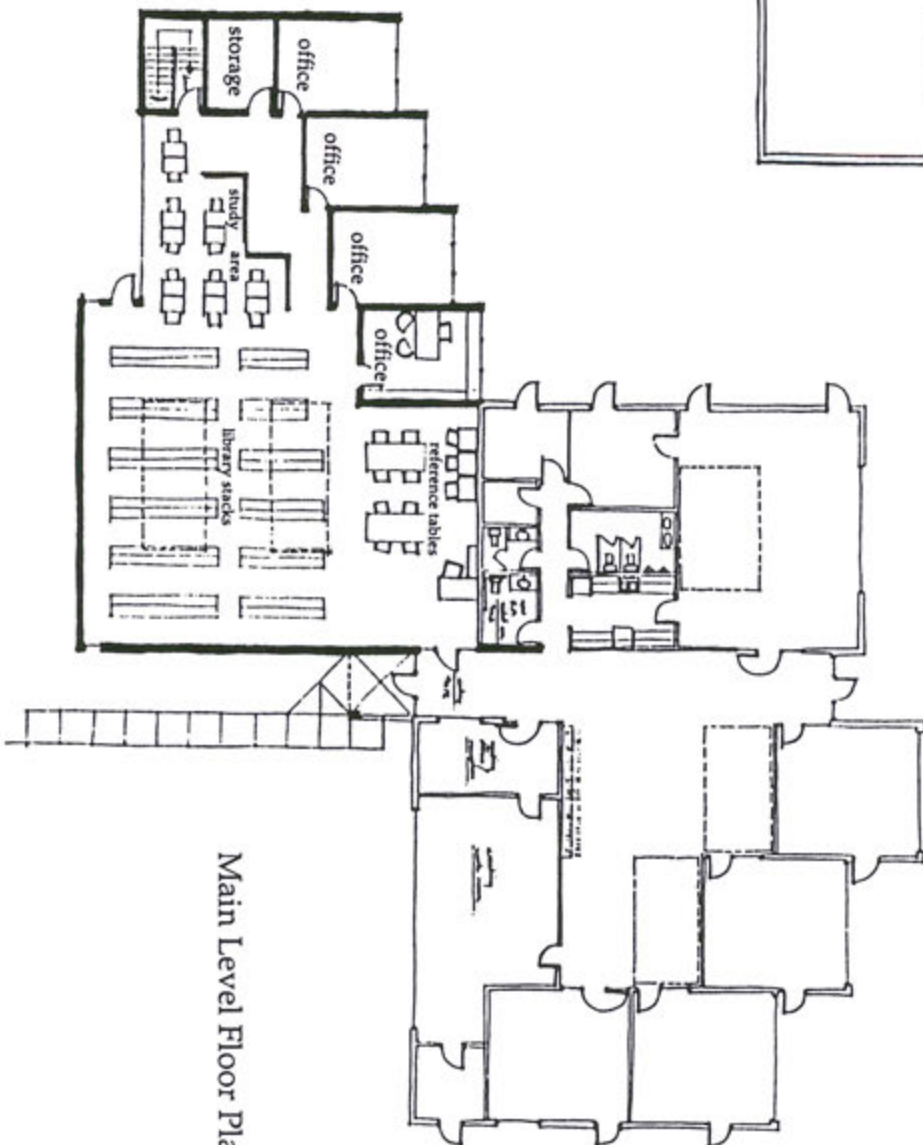


# **PROTESTANT REFORMED SEMINARY** PLANS & SECTION

Basement Level Plan



Main Level Floor Plan





## Taking Heed to the Doctrine

Rev. Charles Terpstra

# The Holiness of God (4)

*And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.*

Isaiah 6:3, 5

### Introduction

Isaiah 6 has become one of my favorite passages of God's Word. It was the passage which God primarily used (as preached by a former pastor of mine) to lay the call to the gospel ministry upon my heart and mind; and it has been a constant reminder to me of the humility and confidence with which my ministry must be characterized. The truth which stands out in this passage and which most impresses me (and I trust you too!) is the awesome holiness of God, and along with this, the effect this has upon the child of God.

In the vision recorded here Isaiah saw Jehovah God in His splendid purity and perfection and consequently in His supreme glory. And that so overwhelmed him, that he felt himself "undone." Seeing God's impeccable Being and spotless nature, he was smitten with a deep sense of his own impurity and filthiness as a sinner. Such must be the experience of every child of God; and it will be, but only when we have gazed upon the Holy God and seen Him in His infinite perfection and purity.

In our series on the nature of God, we are considering some of His glorious attributes. To this point we have examined His supreme majesty

and His absolute sovereignty. In this article we want to consider the holiness of God.

### God's Holiness Stated

The holiness of God is one of the ethical virtues of God's nature. As God is the God of goodness and righteousness, of wisdom and grace, of love and longsuffering, so is He the God of infinite holiness. In fact, God's holiness has been called "the ethical virtue of God *par excellence*, under which all the other ethical attributes may be subsumed, and of which they are aspects" (H. Hoeksema, *Reformed Dogmatics*, p. 100). The Puritan John Howe referred to it as "a transcendental attribute, that ... runs through the rest, and casts lustre upon them. It is an attribute of attributes."

It is especially in His holiness that the Lord God is revealed as being wholly distinct from and transcendent above all creatures. That is evident from the basic meaning of the word "holiness" in the Scriptures, which is that of separation, "to be set apart." As the Holy One, God is the "wholly Other": "There is none holy as the Lord"; "Who is able to stand before this holy LORD God?" (I Sam. 2:2; 6:20). God does not merely possess holiness; He *is* holiness. Holiness is His name and His nature (cf. Lev. 19:2; Ps. 111:9; Is. 12:6). And therefore in His holiness God is revealed as the God of *glory* and *beauty*: "Who is like unto thee, O LORD, among the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness..."; "O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness" (Ex. 15:11; Ps. 96:9). That too is what Isaiah found to be true in his vision.

Since holiness belongs to the ethical virtues of God, it also speaks of the truth that He is the God who is wholly "set apart" from all that is sinful and

vile. Arthur W. Pink has written concerning this, "As God's power is the opposite of the native weakness of the creature, as His wisdom is in complete contrast from the least defect of understanding or folly, so His holiness is the very antithesis of all moral blemish or defilement" (*The Attributes of God*, p. 41). The Scriptures teach the same: "...God is light, and in him is no darkness at all"; "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity..."; "God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man..." (I Jn. 1:5; Hab. 1:13; Ja. 1:13).

Positively, this means that the Holy God is absolute perfection, the sum of all moral virtue and excellence. H. Hoeksema has defined God's holiness this way: "...That wonder of the divine nature according to which God is absolute, infinite, eternal, and ultimate ethical perfection, Himself being the standard, motive, and purpose of all the activity of His personal nature, so that He is eternally consecrated to Himself alone as the only Good" (*Reformed Dogmatics*, p. 100). The Scripture puts it this way: "He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he" (Deut. 32:4). It was in the light of these aspects of God's awesome holiness that Isaiah cried out, "I am a man of unclean lips." Do we also see ourselves in the same light and do we have the same cry?

### God's Holiness Displayed

Holiness is not a virtue of God which remains hidden within the divine nature; rather is it displayed in all He says and does. It is set forth first of all in His *works*. Psalm 145:17 declares, "The LORD is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works."

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This is to say that all of God's works are without sin and evil, without flaw and imperfection; He never acts impurely or makes mistakes (the very thought of which is blasphemous!). His works are pure and perfect as He is, and in doing them He is wholly devoted to His own goodness and glory. His work of creation was without sin; He declared at the end of the six days of creation that His work was "very good" (Gen. 1:31). His work of providence is always carried out in absolute moral excellence and flawlessness. Even when God directs the powers of darkness and the wicked deeds of men His working is untouched by evil but is pure and perfect. Even when the Lord brings "evils" into our lives such as sickness, death, trouble, and distress, He works with absolute holiness. And, of course, God's work of salvation is done in holiness. Does it not proceed from His holy counsel?! Is it not carried out through the spotless Lamb of God and through His holy actions of obedience?! Is it not His work of delivering us from the impurity and vileness of our sin unto the purity and perfection of Himself and heaven?!

Secondly, God's holiness is displayed in His *Word and law*. Because God is holy, all that He speaks and commands is holy. Men may judge God's Word and law to be unholy things; they may treat them as things profane; they may consider it to be rife with errors, but the testimony of Scripture is clear: "The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times"; "The law of the LORD is perfect...; the statutes of the LORD are right...; the commandment of the LORD is pure.... The fear of the LORD is clean...." "Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good" (Ps. 12:6; 19:7-9; Rom. 7:12). The Scriptures are called the *holy* Scriptures (II Tim. 3:15), because they are set apart from all human books, being without error and defilement, proceeding from the pure mouth of the Lord. The whole of them and every part of them is uncorrupted truth.

The holiness of God is seen in the content of God's Word and law as well. *What* God says to man and *what* God commands of man reveals His holy character. In His Word and law God speaks against sin, forbidding of us that character and conduct that is ethically vile and polluted; and in His Word and law He speaks for holiness, commanding us to have that character and conduct which is morally pure and excellent.

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### *Sin is no trifling matter to the Holy One!*

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Thirdly, God's holiness is displayed in His condemning and punishing *wrath*. In our day preachers of the gospel and members of the churches do not want to talk about God's holy wrath. They would rather speak of His love, by which they mean His love of sin and His tolerance of every life-style on the earth. But we dare not forget that God's holiness means that He must react against all that is against His holy will and ways. And that reaction of God's holiness is His wrath. The Scripture is plain that God is a consuming fire toward those who live in moral filth, that He is angry with the wicked every day, and that He punishes sin with temporal as well as eternal judgment. Sin is no trifling matter to the Holy One!

For believers, then, the most awesome and most humbling display of God's holiness is the *cross of Jesus Christ*. For there the Holy One caused His Son to pass through the fires of His holy wrath as He bore the guilt and penalty of our foul transgressions. As A.W. Pink has said, "Wonderously and yet most solemnly does the Atonement display God's infinite holiness and abhorrence of sin. How hateful must sin be to God for Him to punish it to its utmost deserts when it was imputed to His Son!" (*Attributes*, p. 43). That display of divine holiness marks our spiritual-moral cleansing from sin and our consecration to the living God. Blessed be the Holy God!

### **God's Holiness Reflected**

The holiness of God is not only one of His ethical attributes; it is also one of His *communicable* ones. That is, God is pleased to impart His holy character and conduct to His elect people by sovereign grace in Jesus Christ and through His Spirit, so that they *reflect* it. This work of God's grace is known as "sanctification." By this work God principally separates His own from the power and pollution of sin, and devotes them to obedient service to Himself (cf. Heb. 9:14; 10:22; I Pet. 1:2). This imparted holiness of God is reflected in several ways in the life of believers.

It is reflected in their desire and striving to be holy as God is holy, for this is indeed what God charges them: "But as He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation" (I Pet. 1:15). We mirror God's holiness when we take the same attitude He has toward sin, loathing it and condemning it; we radiate with His holiness when we think on and perform those things which are true and just and pure and lovely and virtuous (Phil. 4:8). Is God's purity and perfection shining through you? Are we reflecting His awesome holiness in a vile world?

God's holiness is also reflected by His people in their *worship* of Him. Because God is holy we *must* worship Him: "Let them praise thy great and terrible name; for it is holy" (Ps. 99:3); "I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified" (Lev. 10:3). But the holiness of God also *defines* our worship. Knowing the awesome holiness of God, we will not worship Him with profane elements or with proud hearts, but with purity and with fear. Like the seraphim which Isaiah saw, we will cover our feet and our faces, bowing before the Holy One with reverence and humility, and we will raise songs which exalt and glorify Him. Is the holiness of God mirrored in your worship of the Lord of hosts?

May our reflection on the supreme holiness of God cause us more and more to reflect His holy character in our daily lives. □



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## *In His Fear*

Mr. Fred Hanko

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# Education in the Post-Christian Era

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I am aware of the fact that many of you may argue with my title. You may well say, "The period now ended was not a Christian era." I agree in a sense with such an objection, but I am sticking to my title anyway because I want to make a point that I consider extremely important: the times have so changed that any similarity between current moral standards and Christian moral standards is superficial at best.

We are living in a world that has changed rapidly; the old standards of morality are gone. This is obvious, of course, in the standards of sexual behavior. What used to be sin that was not even to be named among saints is now "alternate life style." When God sends upon the people

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*We have the enormous task of training our children to live as children of God in such an environment.*

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judgment for their sins, they try to eradicate the judgment rather than eliminate the sins. Society has become so involved with its own pleasure, convenience, and comfort that they make it acceptable to kill an unwanted fetus rather than endure inconvenience or discomfort. Nearly any kind of behavior is acceptable if

the payment is high enough. "Materialistic," "hedonistic" are words that fit our society exactly. We have the enormous task of training our children to live as children of God in such an environment. We have to teach them to derive their values from the Word of God when the values of the world tempt them nearly everywhere, often including their own homes. We have to teach our children self-sacrifice in a self-indulgent world. We have to teach them humility in a self-promoting world. We have to teach them not to strive to be number one but to strive to be number last. Not "self-esteem" but "Let each esteem other better than themselves." How are we going to do that?

One of the first things we have to agree upon is the part that our schools have in the whole educational enterprise. Many schools have become all things to all the people. They concern themselves with the physical welfare of children by promoting physical education, and even by making sure that the children have proper meals. Schools have to a greater or a lesser degree assumed responsibility for the social development of the children by providing classes that are designed to teach social skills, and by arranging social activities for the students. Knowledge and skills that used to be learned at home are now commonly taught in school: cooking, family living, drivers training, and many others. For a number of years now, whenever a group of parents, a group of teachers, or a group of lawmakers perceived a problem, the school was given the responsibility of solving it by developing a new educational program.

This is not to say that all of these

programs ought to be thrown out of the schools. Some of these may well be important duties that the schools can do more effectively and more efficiently than anyone else. But it does mean that many new programs have been inserted into school days and school years that have not been made any longer. It ought to be perfectly obvious, then, that the schools are going to teach much less math and science and all of the other subjects which students in foreign countries learn so well. We have to be aware of the fact that for every additional duty we place upon the school there will be a price to pay in some other part of the school program. This refers also to extracurricular activities to the extent that they consume part of the school day.

We must be agreed upon what the function of the school is in the Protestant Reformed community, and upon which programs are necessary to carry out those functions. We have to resist the temptation to add new programs to our school curricula just in order to "keep them up to date." This is not to say that the old subjects and the old materials are the only proper ones. We need to make changes because the world is changing and because the needs of the constituency are changing. But any changes we make must be consistent with and promote what we have agreed is the proper function of the school.

What is that proper function of the school? It is to complement the work of the parents so that together they may help students live as citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven and prepare to continue as such citizens throughout their lives. For that they need knowledge and skills that will

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enable them to earn a living for themselves and their families, train their own children in the fear of the Lord, contribute to the church of God and the welfare of the people of God, and be themselves through their words and their actions living witnesses of the marvelous work of God.

It would seem at first that these things are so obvious that they really do not need to be mentioned. Yet I think we have to be reminded from time to time. There is a growing divergence between the world and the church in the principles they teach, in their definitions of right and wrong, in the values they hold. It would seem then that the differences between the church and the world ought to be becoming more and more noticeable. Yet that difference seems to be less than one would expect. I think that the reason that Christians are not as conspicuous as they ought to be is that many have adopted the values and the behavior of the world.

It is very important, then, that the parents and the schools define those values that we want our children to adopt and that we work together to teach them. What are these

values? Happiness? Fame? Leisure? Social position? Large income? Although we would all hasten to reject these as values that are more important than spiritual values, too often we act as though these are the most important values of all. In the teaching of values by our actions I'm afraid that our schools and our homes give, at best, very mixed signals to the children. At worst we often promote by our actions the values that we condemn. In today's world we can't afford to do that.

Whenever I become a bit complacent and think I'm doing a pretty good job, I just listen to the students talking casually to each other. That's a pretty good indication of their values. I hear them talking about the

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*... we often promote  
by our actions  
the values that we condemn.*

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shows they've watched on television. They talk about their heroes, the basketball stars of the NBA, whose ex-

ceptional wickedness has become widely known recently. When they talk about the future, they most often talk about expensive cars they will have. I know a number of students whose values are those of Christians. These rarely speak of their values publicly because they are afraid of being mocked by others. There are a couple other things we have to work on: the fact that our children sometimes mock those that behave in a Christian way and that many of our children, like us, conceal our Christianity out of fear of being mocked.

These are no new things that I am promoting; they are as old as our schools — as old as organized education. But I sense a growing lack of agreement among us just at a time when there is a growing urgency about the business of defining the function of our schools and the methods of carrying out that function.

We must have agreement on these things if we are going to be successful. The school may well be doing those things that the parents cannot do themselves, but the schools cannot accomplish much at all without the support of the parents. □

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## Guest Article

Rev. Steven Houck

# Rightly Dividing the Word

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There is not another book in all the world which is so mistreated and abused as the Bible. Many believers and even many ministers do not handle the Word of God properly. The words of Holy Scripture and their meaning are stretched, twisted, and distorted. The apostle Peter refers in

II Peter 3:16 to those who so torture Scripture. He speaks of Scripture "which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, ... unto their own destruction."

We have all witnessed such Scripture twisting. Think, for instance, of the great violence which is done to the Bible by those who try to demonstrate that women may hold office in the church. Consider the way in which the Arminians defend their heretical ideas about salvation and grace. God's

Word is tortured to make it say what people want it to say.

These people, however, are not the only ones who pervert Scripture. Sometimes we are guilty of Scripture-twisting too. We read a passage over quickly and think that we know what it means. We pay no attention to the meaning of the words and the grammar. Sometimes we take a verse completely out of its context. Maybe our only purpose is to find in the passage something which we believe, rather

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Rev. Houck is pastor of Peace Protestant Reformed Church in Lynwood, Illinois.



than take the passage for what it says.

That is not good. It is very dangerous. We must do all we can to guard ourselves against mishandling the Word. This kind of interpretation of Scripture undermines the authority of the Bible. People are left with the impression that anyone can prove anything from the Bible. The Bible is meaningless.

That is why we need the admonition of the apostle in II Timothy 2:15: "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

Here we are commanded rightly to divide the word of Truth. The word translated "rightly divide" means "to cut straight." When used of the Scriptures it means "to interpret correctly or expound." As those who have been given God's inspired Word, we have a calling to interpret that Word correctly. That is especially true of preachers. Thus this letter was written to a preacher, Timothy. But it is also true of every child of God. We may not be like so many today, who handle Scripture in an inappropriate way.

What does it mean to divide the Word rightly? How do we correctly interpret Holy Scripture?

First of all I want to mention four general principles.

1) Let the passage speak for itself. This is very important. Much misinterpretation of Scripture is the result of reading into a passage something which is not there. We go to the passage with a preconceived idea of what it teaches and we force that into the passage. That is just the opposite of what we ought to do. We must not force anything into the passage but we must find the meaning of the passage in the passage itself.

2) The correct interpretation of a passage is found in the normal understanding of the language. Some people spiritualize Scripture. They are always looking for a deeper, hidden meaning. But there is no hidden meaning in the language of Scripture. Every passage has but one meaning, not several levels of meaning. That

one meaning is gained from the normal rules of grammar.

3) Scripture is its own interpreter. One passage of Scripture is explained by other passages of Scripture which deal with the same subject. By comparing the words and concepts of a passage with those same words and concepts used elsewhere in the Bible, the Bible itself indicates the proper meaning. This is critical to dividing the Word of Truth rightly.

4) To understand a passage properly we must divide it up into its constituent parts. We get a general understanding of a passage simply by reading it. But if we are going to have a full understanding of it, we must divide it up and analyze each part. We can not understand the whole unless we first understand the parts which make up the whole. That is true even when the whole is more than the sum of its parts.

With these four principles in mind, consider five more principles that more specifically indicate how to deal with a passage of Scripture.

1) To divide the passage properly we must come to an understanding of the individual words which are used. We believe in *verbal* inspiration. Therefore the key elements in a passage are the individual words. We ought to know two things about the words — their grammatical meaning and their biblical usage. To learn these two things, we need to do a word study. First we ought to look up the grammatical meaning of a word. Then we need to study every occurrence of the word in the Bible. That will give us an understanding of the idea involved in a word.

For instance, if we are studying John 3:16, we would study such words as, "God," "love," "world," "gave," and so on. That would tell us whom God loves and what it means that He loves them.

2) This first principle implies the second. In our study of a passage, we must have and use some basic tools. We will need a Webster's Dictionary for the meaning of words. We will need a Bible concordance so that we can look up all of the places the word

is used in the Bible. If we use Strong's Concordance, there is associated with every word a number which tells us the Greek or Hebrew word used. Even if we do not know the original languages, it is possible for us to find the Hebrew or Greek meaning of the words. We might also use an Interlinear which has the Hebrew or Greek words of the text and the English meaning right below them. Finally we should have a Bible Dictionary which tells us about people, places, and things.

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3) After having done the word studies by using the various tools I have mentioned, we must put it all back together again. We have to see, by looking at the sentence structure, how each word is related to the others. What is the verb? What is the action that is going on — past, present, or future? What is the subject doing the action? What is the object of the action? What are the modifying clauses and phrases? Are there important conjunctions like the contrasting "but"? This is very important. Without this, even though we know the meaning of individual words, we miss the meaning of the passage as a whole.

4) As we do our word studies and put it all back together again we must keep our eyes on the context. One of the greatest abuses in Bible interpretation is not paying attention to the context. This is why the Arminians go so wrong. They take a verse out of its context and treat it as if it stands alone. This is especially true of words like "all" and "world." To know the meaning of these words, we must see what is being dealt with in the context. If our interpretation does not fit the context, we have twisted the Scriptures.

5) After following the four steps



outlined earlier, we must test our interpretation by asking ourselves, "Is it in harmony with the teaching of all of Scripture?" Because the Scriptures are one book, they harmonize perfectly. There will not be something taught in Genesis that is contradicted by something in Revelation. That is especially true of doctrine. If the interpretation we come up with conflicts with biblical, Reformed doctrine we have made a serious mistake. We must find and correct our mistake so that our interpretation harmonizes with the whole Truth of God's Word.

All of this must be done in a certain manner. Notice that the apostle says, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman...." In rightly dividing the Word of truth we are called "workman" and are required to "study."

Correctly interpreting the Bible is hard work. But this is what God requires of us. We are to be "workmen" in God's vineyard. This is especially true of ministers, but also of all believers. As believers, we ought to work very hard with respect to this matter of rightly dividing the Word. If we are lazy, if we will not work, then we will not interpret the Bible correctly. We must work just as much as a man who goes out into the field and harvests the wheat. We must work as laborers.

That means study. It is good just to read the Bible. But we must not stop there. We are required by God to study the Bible. Every Christian ought to be a Bible student. We ought to be like the Bereans of whom it is said, "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11). The Bereans studied the Scriptures. They worked hard in order that they might come to a proper interpretation of Scripture. They did that daily. That is our calling also.

We work very hard at making money. Do you not think working for spiritual bread deserves the same zeal, enthusiasm, and time? If we would study the Bible with just an eighth of

the time and energy which we put into making a living, we could have some very beneficial personal Bible studies. This also implies that we take every opportunity to study the Bible with our congregations. Every one of us ought to attend our society Bible studies and work hard at preparing for them.

We must not only work hard rightly to divide God's Word, but we must do it in a spiritual manner. That is implied by the nature of the book we seek to divide rightly. It is the inspired Word of Truth. It is God's Book. Interpreting the Bible correctly is a spiritual activity. Unless we do it in a spiritual manner, it will not profit us.

That implies that we must pray before we begin this spiritual work. Since we can not spiritually understand the words ourselves, but need the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, we must pray for that enlightenment. Unless God by His Spirit speaks to our hearts through the words of the passage, all of our work will be in vain. But God has promised that if we do pray and ask Him for understanding, He will give it to us. James says, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."

That also implies that we must rightly divide the Truth in faith. We must go to God's Word believing that it is God's inspired, infallible Word. Often this is exactly where the problem is. Many people do not want to believe the teaching of a particular passage. They *deliberately* distort and twist that Word.

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*We must be ready  
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Without faith it is impossible rightly to divide the Word of Truth. For example, we can not properly understand the creation account with-

out faith. We read in Hebrews 11:3, "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." We must go to Genesis 1-2 in faith, believing that God created the world out of no pre-existing material, but by His Word alone.

If we are to interpret the Word of Truth in a spiritual manner, we must be ready to apply that Word to ourselves. We must not treat the Bible as a technical manual which is unrelated to us and our spiritual life. The Word of Truth is our spiritual food and drink. It is the revelation of our God and Savior. We must not handle it as we handle a history book or a business report. We must be ready to receive comfort from its promises and admonition from its exhortations. We must be ready for the Bible to speak personally to us and our needs.

That brings us to the reason for rightly dividing the Word of Truth. The reason is twofold. First of all it relates to what we are to divide. Notice the apostle says, "...rightly dividing the word of truth." When we divide the Scriptures, we are interpreting the Word. We are dividing that which is the written Word of God — not man's word, not the word of angels, but God's Word.

Is that not a good reason to be careful in how we handle this Book? Do we not owe this Book and its Divine Author that much honor and respect? We can not treat this Book like other books, because it is not like any other book. This is a sacred Book, a holy Book, and therefore it must be handled as such.

What disrespect we have for this Book when we twist it and distort it. We twist and distort God's Word. How disrespectful of us to pay no attention to the meaning of the words, the sentence structure, the context, and soon. We disregard God's Word. How dishonoring not even to care about studying this Book or taking the time to interpret it. We shun the Word of God.

But even more than that, we must be careful to divide this Word of



Truth rightly because it is the *Truth*. If we do not divide this Word correctly, we do not have the Truth. Then the message of this Book is lost to us. Then we have the lie. If we do not have the correct interpretation of a passage, we have the incorrect interpretation. An incorrect interpretation can very easily lead us into error and false doctrine. If we want the Truth, we must rightly divide the Word of Truth.

There is another reason which relates more to the interpreter than to

the Word itself. Notice we read, "Study to shew thyself *approved* unto God, a workman that needeth not to be *ashamed*...." If we rightly divide the Word of Truth, we will not need to be ashamed. We will have the Truth and know the Truth.

But what if we do not study God's Word? What if we work for material bread, but not for the bread of life? What if we do not interpret God's Word correctly when we do read or study the Bible because we are

too lazy to dig for the proper meaning? What if, as a result of that, we do not know the Truth, and maybe even embrace the lie? Then we ought to be ashamed. Then we ought to bow our heads, for we are unfaithful to God.

On the other hand, rightly dividing God's Truth will bring God's blessing and approval. "Study to show thyself *approved* unto God." That is the ultimate reason for rightly dividing the Word of Truth — God's approval. □

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## News From Our Churches

Mr. Benjamin Wigger

Let me begin this installment of the "News" with thanks to our Father in Heaven for the safe return of so many of our churches' pastors and elders this past month.

First, on February 20 Rev. Dykstra and Elder Henry Bleyenburg returned safely to Sioux Falls, SD, after spending about three weeks in Ghana, Africa.

Their safe return home was followed the next week by the return to Grandville, MI of Rev. and Mrs. J. Kortering, on Wednesday, February 26, after spending six months laboring with our sister churches in Singapore.

The very next evening Rev. Gritters and his father, Elder Ed Gritters, landed at the Kent County International Airport in Grand Rapids, MI after having labored with the Protestant Reformed Churches of Jamaica for the month of February.

Stop and consider a minute that God is indeed using our churches to spread the good news of His gospel literally around the world. Africa, Singapore, Jamaica, Ireland, New Zealand, Australia, Idaho, Florida.

And the list grows longer. What an awesome responsibility we have as churches. Pray that the Lord will continue to find us faithful.

### **Evangelism Activities**

It may be well also to point out here that in connection with our churches' work in Ghana, the Hull PRC in Hull, IA has sponsored a radio program on Radio Africa for about five months. Their pastor, Rev. R. Moore, is on every Sunday at 6:15 PM with 15-minute messages from Scripture. Hull can also report that they have received responses about the program from several African countries.

### **Mission Activities**

Candidate Mitch Dick has been busy these past six months filling in at the Grandville, MI PRC in the absence of Rev. Kortering. Now that the Korterings have returned to Grandville, Mitch has been given the opportunity to travel to Northern Ireland on behalf of our churches. Mitch and his wife left March 3 and, the Lord willing, they plan to remain in Ireland with the Covenant Reformed Fellowship through April. If you would care to write them there, their address is:

3 Sunnyside Doagh Rd.  
Newtownabbey, Co. Antrim  
Northern Ireland BT36 8BL.

### **Congregational Activities**

On Saturday, March 7, the congregation of the Grandville PRC got together at the Hope School gym for a Welcome Back Breakfast for Rev. and Mrs. Kortering. It offered the congregation an opportunity officially to welcome the Korterings back to their fellowship. Proceeds from the breakfast were to go towards Grandville Benevolent Fund and the 1992 Young People's Convention.

Before we leave Grandville, we could also insert here that their Adult Bible Study sponsored a special meeting on February 25. They invited Prof. D. Engelsma to attend their meeting to talk about his book *Hyper-Calvinism and the Call of the Gospel*.

Classis West met on March 4 at the Doon, IA PRC. On the night before, Rev. Cammenga, pastor of the Loveland, CO PRC, and a delegate to Classis, gave to the congregation of the First PRC of Edgerton, MN a slide presentation of his recent visit to the Covenant Reformed Fellowship of Northern Ireland. You may remember that he preached there back in November of last year.

On Sunday evening, March 8, the congregation of the First PRC of Edmonton, AB, Canada was invited to return to their church auditorium for a combined singspiration and choir program.

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



The February 15th issue of the *SB* contained an item on the back page dealing with the Hull, IA PRC's plans to begin building a new church sanctuary this spring if results from a pledge drive conducted after the first of the year proved successful. Well, Hull's Council was happy to inform their congregation that they were "thankful to God that He has given us the desire to bring forth and the means to undertake this work in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." In harmony with His will, construction will begin this spring.

The Consistory of the Hudsonville, MI PRC decided to make a

couple of changes beginning on April 5. The elders decided to greet the congregation at the rear of the sanctuary after the service. And second, also beginning April 5, in the reciting of the Apostles' Creed the congregation will use the word "Spirit" instead of "Ghost" and the word "living" instead of "quick."

### Ministerial Trios and Calls

The congregation of the Hope PRC of Isabel, SD has called Rev. K. Hanco to serve as their pastor. With Rev. Hanco on the trio were the Revs. W. Bekkering and R. Flikkema.

And the Council of the Immanuel

PRC of Lacombe, AB Canada has presented a trio consisting of Rev. M. DeVries, Cand. M. Dick, and Rev. R. Dykstra to their congregation from which one was to be extended a call to serve as their next pastor. □

### Parting Quote:

*"The obedience that springs from faith is the obedience of a son, not a slave."*

—T. Brooks

### RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Reformed Free Publishing Association (Permanent Committee for Publication) express their heartfelt sympathy to their committee member James VanOverloop and his family in the death of his wife

#### LINDA VANOVERLOOP.

"He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds" (Psalm 147:3)

Charles Kregel, President  
David Harbach, Secretary

### RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Adult Bible Class of Faith Protestant Reformed Church expresses its sympathy to one of its members, Mr. Jim VanOverloop, in the loss of his wife

#### MRS. LINDA VANOVERLOOP

who was taken to glory on March 2, 1992.

May we and her family find peace in His promise "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also ... I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you" (John 14:3, 18).

Rev. K. Koole, President  
Miss H.J. Kuiper, Secretary

### NOTICE!!

First Protestant Reformed Church is sponsoring a public lecture on April 30, 1992 at 8 PM in the auditorium of First Church. The theme of this lecture is "The Office of All Believers," and Rev. Meindert Joostens will direct our attention to "The Power and Responsibilities of the Pew." Tapes will be available of this lecture.

### RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Men's Society of Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church expresses sympathy to a fellow member, Gordon VanOverloop, and his family in the death of his daughter-in-law,

#### MRS. LINDA VANOVERLOOP.

May they be comforted in the assurance that "...all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28).

Henry Boer, President  
Gerrit Holstege, Secretary

### NOTICE!!

Classis East will meet in regular session on Wednesday, May 13, 1992 at the Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church. Material to be treated at this session must be in the hands of the Stated Clerk by April 12, 1992.

Jon J. Huiskens, Stated Clerk

### WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On March 19, 1992, the 45th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents

#### MR. and MRS. DONALD LOTTERMAN

was celebrated. As children and grandchildren we rejoice with them and are thankful to our heavenly Father for the love and instruction we have received from them. May the Lord continue to bless them and keep them in His care in the years ahead.

"But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him, and His righteousness unto children's children; to such as keep his covenant and to those that remember his commandments to do them" (Psalm 103:17, 18).

- ☼ Clare and Jan Kuiper
- ☼ Ed and Marry Lotterman
- ☼ Harry and Mary VandenBerg
- ☼ Mike and Grace Lotterman
- ☼ Harv and Marcia VerBeek
- ☼ Steve Lotterman
- 26 grandchildren
- 2 great-grandchildren

Hope Protestant Reformed Church (Walker)

### NOTICE!!!

All material for the 1992 Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches should be in the hands of the Stated Clerk no later than April 15.

Rev. M. Joostens, Stated Clerk



*Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love,  
therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee.*

Jeremiah 31:3

*On the great love of God I lean,  
Love of the Infinite, Unseen,  
With nought of heaven or earth between.*

*This God is mine, and I am His;  
His love is all I need of bliss.*

If ever human love was tender, and self-sacrificing, and devoted; if ever it could bear and forbear; if ever it could suffer gladly for its loved ones; if ever it was willing to pour itself out in a lavish abandonment for the comfort or pleasure of its objects; then infinitely more is Divine love tender, and self-sacrificing, and devoted, and glad to bear and forbear, and to suffer, and to lavish its best of gifts and blessings upon the objects of its love. Put together all the tenderest love you know of, the deepest you have ever felt, and the strongest that has ever been poured out upon you, and heap upon it all the love of all the loving human hearts in the world, and then multiply it by infinity, and you will begin, perhaps, to have some faint glimpse of what the love of God is.

*Standard Bearer*  
April 1, 1933