

# *THE* **STANDARD BEARER**

*A Reformed  
Semi-Monthly  
Magazine*

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Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531)  
Swiss Reformer

see: "A Cloud of Witnesses" — p. 465

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*Vol. 68, No. 20  
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## In This Issue ...

For many of our readers the month of September means "back-to-school" — either because they send their children off to school, or because they themselves are students or teachers. Appropriately therefore Mr. Fred Hanko, in his rubric in this issue, addresses the matter of grades and report cards.

"Appropriately," we say, because the truth is that grades are a matter of no little importance to students, and to their parents, the latter of whom very likely admonish their children at the beginning of the year to apply themselves wholeheartedly to every task, so that their report cards might be a favorable reflection on such effort.

It's good for parents to do that; for students do well to resolve to be studious. But, as Mr. Hanko suggests, there are in the marking system some inherent dangers, which should by all means be guarded against. The problem is not with the symbols themselves, or with the system itself, but, as Mr. Hanko notes correctly, with our interpretation of them and our attitude towards them. Never of course must we, as students or parents, conceive of those marks as ends in themselves. Nor must the attainment of *high* scores produce in a student any other satisfaction than that he has been diligent in the use of abilities given by God.

More difficult, perhaps, is our learning to accept *low* scores, when they are attained by a student who is performing at or near peak capacity. A "D" in that case would seem, on the surface, to be so *unfair*. Would not an "A," or at least a "B," be a more appropriate reward for that effort? But ... this is where that matter of attitude toward and understanding of *marks* comes into play. Just what are those symbols supposed to communicate? And how should we view the grades which we see on the report cards of our own children? For helpful insights read, in this issue, "Grades and Report Cards."

D.D.

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## Meditation

Rev. Wilbur Bruinsma

# Our Great God

*Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary: who is so great a God as our God?*

Psalm 77:13

An earnest expression of praise to God! The psalmist is overwhelmed with the greatness of our God: who is so great a God as our God? What powerful display of God's majesty and might could have moved him to speak such lofty words concerning our God? Read the Psalm. You will discover that these words were born out of some very painful and troublesome experiences. And that is the key to the real beauty of this passage.

Many are the different ways along which God leads His people. My life takes one direction, and yours another. At times they cross and we walk together, but soon they part again and we go our separate ways. But there is one universal truth that characterizes all our ways: much of the time they are difficult and troublesome. We will have our good times and our happy times in this life. In fact, the life of the child of God ought to be filled with the peace and contentment of salvation. But we will never escape the fact that this life is riddled with pains, troubles, and sorrows. We live in a sin-cursed earth, and sin inevitably brings sorrow and woe — not only to the wicked, but to the child of God too! It is little wonder that the Heidelberg Catechism characterizes this life as a "valley of tears."

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

It is. We cannot escape sickness and death; controversy in home, church, or work place; an incessant struggle against our own sin. How many times do we not experience great spiritual drought in our lives — depressing slumps which twist our hearts and souls! Certainly, God does not promise us that He will not send us hard times.

Who has not experienced at one time or another what the psalmist describes for us in verses 2-4 of this Psalm? "In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord: my soul ran in the night, and ceased not: my soul refused to be comforted.... Thou holdest mine eyes waking: I am so troubled I cannot speak." We all have had times when things troubled us so much we could not sleep. We have had times

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*When the troubles  
of life confront us,  
then we must remember  
the God of our salvation ....*

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when it was difficult to pray because the thought of God troubled us. Is it not true that during the hardest of these times we may have asked ourselves questions very similar to the psalmist's? "Will the Lord cast off forever? and will He be favorable no more? Is His mercy clean gone forever? doth His promise fail forevermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath He in anger shut up His tender mercies?" Ah, the psalmist knows exactly how we feel at times in our lives!

But how can the psalmist make

the jump from a heart overwhelmed with sorrow to a confession of the majesty and greatness of God? He can do that because in the midst of his depression he recalled to mind the way God leads His people. "I will remember the works of the Lord: surely I will remember thy wonders of old. I will meditate also of all thy work, and talk of thy doings." When the psalmist recalls all of this, then there is only one conclusion to which he can come in the midst of adversity and trouble: "Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary: who is so great a God as our God?" When the troubles of life confront us, then we must remember the God of our salvation and understand that His way is in the sanctuary.

"In the sanctuary" — that is a beautiful expression. The sanctuary was the innermost part of the temple, which was set aside or consecrated for the worship of God. As such the sanctuary was known as the place of highest communion between God and man. It was a type, therefore, of heaven, where God will dwell with His people in perfection. Thus, when we confess that God's way is in the sanctuary, then we confess, in the first place, that His way is in the heavens. And if that way is in heaven, then it is far above us; that is to say, it is far beyond all human comprehension. So the psalmist says in this verse exactly what he says in a different way in verse 19 of this Psalm: "Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known."

But why is God's way with us beyond our understanding? Why are His footsteps not known? It is be-



cause the way of which the Psalmist speaks in this Psalm is the way of God's eternal counsel.

Before time began, from eternity, God carries with Him His eternal counsel for all things. In that counsel God has ordered everything (in its smallest detail) that takes place in this world. He has ordered all things in creation, in the history of this world, in the nations and in the church. Also in that counsel, however, God has ordered every little detail of our lives. These details are not arbitrary. They do not happen without reason. All are ordered by God to work toward the accomplishment of that one way of God: His glory by way of the salvation of His people and church. And that we must bear in mind first of all, when experiencing the troubles and difficulties of life. "Ere into being I was brought, Thy eye did see, and in Thy thought my life in all its perfect plan was ordered ere my days began" (Psalm 139, stanza 2). We fall before the God of heaven and earth and confess His transcendence and majesty! We bow before Him in humble submission because we know that the counsel of God stands forever, and He sends these troubles in our lives to accomplish His divine will. Never may we falter at this point: Jehovah reigns, and His will He accomplishes.

There is more, of course. We do not submit to God's way because, after all, what else can we do? God will have His way with us no matter what we like. That surely is not our attitude! We must understand that there is more implied in the phrase "in the sanctuary" than what perhaps at first meets the eye. The sanctuary of the temple was that place where God dwelt in all His holiness and purity. It was a place that was dedicated and consecrated to the worship of the holy God of heaven and earth. Also implied, then, is this: "Thy way, O God, is in holiness." This becomes clear when we realize that the name for God in this passage refers to His glory as seen in all of His infinite perfections or attributes. This too is what we must confess when the

troubles and afflictions of life beset us: God's way with us is always holy, just, and good. Never does God send us hardships in life because He takes delight in our woes, or because He is in Himself an evil God. Our troubles befall us because of our own sin. They are a result of man's fall into sin. God is ever holy and just in His dealings with us.

And ... He is ever merciful.

This is a third idea implied in the phrase, "in the sanctuary." The sanctuary is that place where God meets with His people in intimate, covenant communion. Therefore, we can also interpret this phrase to say, "Thy way, O God, is in the midst of Thy church." And that way in which God always deals with His church is in mercy. In other words, although we perhaps will never understand fully why we must walk through a valley of tears in this life, nevertheless we do know that God is always dealing with us in His love and mercy toward us. God is always One who suffers long with His children and pities them in their troubles and afflictions. And He sends those trials only because He knows that they will turn out to the profit and the salvation of His people. God uses the most troublesome difficulties in life for their good.

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*God's way with His people,  
even in affliction,  
is one of mercy.*

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There are two reasons I can say that.

First of all, the Bible abundantly testifies to this in the lives of God's people who are found on the pages of Holy Writ. Do you think that the fall into sin was a pleasant experience for Adam and Eve? Can you imagine the burden they had to bear their entire earthly lives? Yet, God used their sin to send our Savior, did He not? Do you think that enduring the Flood was a simple, painless matter for Noah and his family? It was the greatest of all trials for these saints! Yet, God

sent the Flood to deliver the church and keep alive the seed of the covenant so Christ could be born. The same can be said of Sarah's barrenness, Joseph's being sold into Egypt, Israel's bondage in Egypt, the captivity; and so the list can go on. All of these were hard and bitter experiences in the lives of God's people. But God used all of these things for the good of His church and His people. God's way with His people, even in affliction, is one of mercy.

We can say this with confidence for a second reason too. That reason is this: Christ. For us who are in Christ there is no more condemnation. God has poured out all of His wrath and condemnation upon Christ as He hung on the cross. And the result of this gracious work of our Savior is this: God never sends us anything in this life to punish us anymore. Chasten? Yes. But punish in wrath? No! Our sin and guilt are taken from us and we have become the objects of God's favor and fellowship. He will never withhold any good thing from us. Never! Not even when He sends us hardships in this life! In faith we cling to that, too, amidst all the troubles that surround us.

It is then that we will be able to say, even when we are so troubled that we can not sleep, even through the midst of tears: "Who is so great a God as our God?" Our God, the God who has chosen us from eternity, the God who has loved us so much that He has sent His only-begotten Son to die for us, the God who guides and leads us every step of our lives, our God is the greatest! He is most excellent in power, in majesty, in holiness, and in love. Nothing can compare to Him. He alone is all glorious! He has revealed His greatness and excellence in the riches of His grace toward us in Christ. No, God has not in anger shut up His tender mercies! God's mercies are new every morning! He has with His arm redeemed His people. He will not suffer our feet to be moved. O God, how great Thou art! □



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## Editorially speaking ...

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The Reformed Free Publishing Association has just published a timely book on Scripture's teaching concerning the godly woman. The title is *Far Above Rubies: Today's Virtuous Woman*. It is a collection of sermons and articles by ministers in the Protestant Reformed Churches, with the exception of several articles by Abraham Kuiper. Rev. Dale H. Kuiper reviews the book elsewhere in this issue. I recommend the book to the readers of the *Standard Bearer*. It can be ordered from the Reformed Free Publishing Association, P.O. Box 2006, Grand Rapids, MI 49501. The price is \$9.95, plus \$1.75 for shipping and handling.

The Evangelism Committee of the Southwest Protestant Reformed Church has done us valuable service by reprinting Herman Hoeksema's "A Triple Breach." The 77-page booklet is Hoeksema's critical analysis of the "Three Points of Common Grace"

adopted by the Christian Reformed Church in 1924. Originally written at the time of the common grace controversy, the work was last reprinted in 1942 and has, therefore, been out of print for some time. The booklet has not been merely photocopied, but has been set in new, clear print. It has been dressed with a handsome cover. An appendix gives the "Three Points" as the CRC adopted them, with Hoeksema's succinct restatement of the essential teaching of each point. The booklet can be ordered from the Evangelism Committee of the Southwest PRC, 4875 Ivanrest Ave., Grandville, MI 49418. The price is \$1.50 plus \$1.25 for shipping.

Another recent publication that I gladly bring to the attention of our readers is *Pastoral Theology: A Treatise on the Office and Duties of the Christian Pastor* by Patrick Fairbairn. This 19th century Scottish Presbyterian is well-known for the classic *Ty-*

*pology of Scripture*. Long out of print, *Pastoral Theology* is a sound, thorough treatment of the office of the pastor in the church. Written for practical purposes, the book is especially useful to seminarians, pastors, and elders. This is a book to add to the church library. A review of the book will appear in a later issue of the *Standard Bearer*. The price of this hardcover publication is \$15.95. There is no additional charge for shipping. Order from Old Paths Publications, 223 Princeton Road, Audubon, NJ 08106, or call (609) 546-4802. The publisher, a zealous newcomer to the publishing business, has plans for the reprinting of other worthwhile books, including Abraham Kuiper's *In the Shadow of Death*. Work on James Fraser's book on sanctification is already underway. Ask Old Paths for information. □

—DJE

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## Editorials

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### ■ Does God Take Care of Oxen?

In the previous issue of this magazine, we informed the readers of the *Standard Bearer* of Christ's gift to the Protestant Reformed Churches of a pastor and teacher, the Rev. Audred Spriensma, from another denomination.

Reception of a minister by way of Article 9 of the church order of Dordt involves special measures for the financial support of the man and his family. Naturally, he gave up the

support from his congregation when he resigned. But, temporarily, he has no call from a Protestant Reformed congregation. He is, therefore, dependent upon the denomination which he has joined, although synod has not budgeted any money for this purpose.

Classis West made provision for the support of Rev. Spriensma by the following decision:

We recommend that ... South Holland PRC Council be responsible for Rev. Spriensma's financial support, seeking assistance from our other

churches, and that Classis West urge the churches to contribute to this worthy cause.

I bring this need to the attention of all our churches, our members personally, and others who have means and a heart for this good cause.

There is a need. This family of seven requires support.

The need is urgent. Support is required now.

This is a responsibility, and privilege, of the entire Protestant Reformed denomination, and not only of the churches in Classis West.



The South Holland Council exhorts the proper attitude, and sets a worthy example of generosity, in its letter to the South Holland congregation of July 19, 1992. With permission, I quote this letter in full:

Dear Congregation,

As you are well aware by now, at the special meeting of Classis West last month, Rev. Audred Spriensma, formerly a Minister of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church, was examined with a view to becoming a Minister of the Word in our Protestant Reformed Churches. He successfully sustained this examination, was declared to be a Minister of the Word in our churches, and was made eligible for a call. He and his wife, Alva, and their five children have since become members of our South Holland congregation.

One of the immediate concerns of Classis West was the financial support of Rev. Spriensma and his family. With this in mind, the Classis took the following decision: "We recommend that... South Holland PRC Council be responsible for Rev. Spriensma's financial support, seeking assistance from our other churches, and that Classis West urge the churches to contribute to this worthy cause."

In order to carry out this mandate of Classis West, our South Holland PRC Council has set up a "Classical Minister Support Fund" for the financial support of Rev. Spriensma and his family. Based on their present needs, we have drawn up an annual salary of \$41,100.00, which includes health insurance and a car allowance. We have "seeded" this Fund with \$3,500.00 from our General Fund and also made an initial contribution to it of \$1,400.00. From here on this special Fund is to be supported by the offerings taken by our congregation and by the rest of the churches in Classis West.

For this reason we lay this need before you as a congregation. As Classis stated, this is truly a worthy cause. It should be evident to us that while the support of this new minister in our churches is our duty (cf. I Cor. 9), it is also our privilege. With thankfulness to the Lord for leading this servant and his family into our churches, we as a congregation ought

willingly and cheerfully to give toward their needs.

At this time the Council has set three offerings to be taken for this Fund: July 26, August 16, and September 6 (all P.M.). Let us as a body of believers give proof of our love for the gospel and give generously to this cause (cf. II Cor. 8:9; 9:7).

Sincerely,  
The Council  
South Holland PRC

From this letter, it is evident that South Holland's Council needs \$3,425 each month, beginning with July, to meet the needs of the Spriensmas.

In collections and other contributions, let us rise to the occasion, as our people always do.

Rev. and Mrs. Spriensma acted in the faith that trusts God to provide the earthly needs of those who seek His kingdom first.

We will act in the same faith — the faith that seeks the kingdom first in the use of earthly things.

In this way God will fulfill the ordinance that He revealed in the prohibition of Deuteronomy 25:4 against muzzling the ox that treads the corn. His care is not so much for oxen as for the faithful minister of the Word who has devoted his life to the work of the gospel (I Cor. 9:1ff.)

Send the contributions to the Council of the South Holland PRC, 16511 South Park Ave., South Holland, IL 60473. Designate them for the "Classical Minister Support Fund." Those who may desire to communicate with the Spriensmas can do so through the South Holland Council.

And a hearty welcome to Rev. Spriensma and family!

— DJE

## ■ A Brotherly Request that the RCUS Prove Its Charge against the PRC

At the synod of the Reformed Church in the United States (RCUS) held in April of this year, the Home

Missions Committee of the RCUS presented a report that labeled the Protestant Reformed Churches (PRC) hyper-Calvinists.

It is true that the synod of the RCUS did not officially adopt the report of the Home Missions Committee. Such is not the nature of the working of a Reformed synod regarding the annual reports of its permanent committees. But the report containing the labeling of the PRC as hyper-Calvinistic was referred to the "standing missions committee" of the 1992 synod of the RCUS (comparable to a committee of pre-advice at a PRC synod) and, in this way, became part of the official business of the synod.

The synod of a Reformed denomination is responsible for the reports of its committees. The synod of the RCUS did not disavow the charge against the PRC. The decision that synod made on that aspect of its mission labor that involved the reference to the PRC was based in part on the charge that the PRC are hyper-Calvinists. And then the RCUS published the report of its Home Missions Committee with its description of the PRC as hyper-Calvinists in its "1992 Abstract" (comparable to the PRC "Acts of Synod") for its people, and all the world, to read.

The report of the RCUS labeled the PRC hyper-Calvinists.

I say "labeled" advisedly. No evidence for the charge was given. Indeed, no explanation of the charge was offered. The report simply asserted that the theology of the PRC is hyper-Calvinistic.

Hyper-Calvinism is, at the very least, a serious doctrinal error with equally serious practical consequences. That the RCUS regards hyper-Calvinism as a grave evil is plain from the fact that this alleged influence of the PRC upon a group in Minnesota disqualifies the group from joining the RCUS, apparently even as an official mission.

The report of the Home Missions Committee of the RCUS concerns "the possibility of RCUS involvement" in a work with a certain group in Minnesota. In this connec-



tion, the report refers to the theology of the PRC:

There are several different influences within this group that are not healthy. There is strong "Reformed" Baptist leanings amongst some of the members. Some expressed to us that they held to the Baptist position of believer's baptism as opposed to Covenant Baptism.... There is also a hyper-Calvinist influence, coming from Protestant Reformed and Strict Baptist (British) teaching.

After speaking of the group's "exclusive singing of psalms," the report continues:

Considering the strengths and weaknesses of this group, the sub-committee does not believe it should join the RCUS now.... We believe that this Fellowship must conform its doctrine and practice to those current in the RCUS. This is particularly true concerning hyper-Calvinism and Psalm-singing ("1992 Abstract" of the RCUS, p. 35).

I refrain from commenting on the allegation that exclusive singing of the Psalms in worship constitutes a "weakness."

The charge of hyper-Calvinism grieves the PRC.

It grieves us that ministers and elders on the Home Missions Committee regard us as hyper-Calvinists. It grieves us that the synod of the RCUS, at the very least, countenances and spreads this accusation. It grieves us that members of the RCUS, reading the "1992 Abstract," will conclude that the PRC are undoubtedly hyper-Calvinists and, therefore, beyond the pale. It grieves us that men and women outside the RCUS who may read the "1992 Abstract" will conclude that it is an established fact in the Reformed community that the PRC are hyper-Calvinists. It grieves us most of all that a Reformed church condemns the theology of the Canons of Dordt (for this is what the theology of the PRC is) as hyper-Calvinism.

I ask that a spokesman for the RCUS inform us what the RCUS understood by hyper-Calvinism in the

report of its Home Missions Committee. I ask also that this spokesman prove that the theology of the PRC is hyper-Calvinism. This spokesman might well be the chairman of the sub-committee that handed in the report to the Home Missions Committee of the RCUS, or of the Home Missions Committee that delivered the report to the synod of the RCUS, whose name appears in the "1992 Abstract."

The PRC reject the charge that their theology is hyper-Calvinism. These Churches repudiate hyper-Calvinism as a deviation from the Reformed faith.

Hyper-Calvinism is the denial that, in the preaching of the gospel, God calls the unregenerated sinner to repent of his sins and to believe in Christ. The grounds given for this denial by genuine hyper-Calvinists are, first, that Christ did not die for the reprobate unregenerate and, second, that the unregenerated sinner is unable to obey the call, since he is totally depraved.

The practical consequence of the error is that a hyper-Calvinistic church restricts the preaching of the gospel to the regenerated elect. Particularly, the call of the gospel, "Believe on Jesus Christ," is limited to those who show election by giving evidence of regeneration. Such a church rules out the possibility of missions.

In keeping with the Reformed tradition and in harmony with the Reformed confessions, the PRC teach that the external call of the gospel must go out to all without distinction. God wills it. In the preaching of the gospel, God Himself calls, or summons, or commands, all who are in the audience, unregenerated as well as regenerated, reprobate as well as elect, to repent of their sins and to believe on His Son, Jesus Christ. In this external call, God is serious (cf. Matt. 22:1-14; Mark 16:15; Acts 17:30; Canons of Dordt, II/5; III, IV/8,9).

Neither the truth that Christ did not die for some who are externally called (the reprobate) nor the truth that they are unable to comply with the call by believing (for they are totally depraved) detracts in the

slightest from the rightfulness of their being thus called. Even though Christ did not die for them and even though they are unable to believe, it is their duty to repent and believe.

Accordingly, the PRC preach Christ to all persons promiscuously and without distinction to whom God in His good pleasure sends the gospel by them. They present Christ to all as the only way of salvation. They urgently call all to repent and believe, promising those who do believe that they shall be saved. They engage in evangelism at home and in missions at home and abroad.

Why then does the RCUS label the PRC as hyper-Calvinists?

The PRC do indeed firmly believe, and boldly confess, that the sovereign grace of the Holy Spirit works through and with the preaching of the gospel irresistibly to draw some particular persons to Christ in distinction from others. The grace of God in the preaching is particular. Scripture makes a sharp distinction between the external call that comes to all who hear and the internal call, which alone is saving, that God extends only to some (cf. Matt. 22:14; Rom. 8:30; Canons of Dordt, I/6; II/7; III, IV/10ff.).

Is this our hyper-Calvinism in the mind of the RCUS?

The PRC firmly believe also, and unashamedly confess, that this distinction which God Himself makes in the preaching between hearer and hearer is due to God's eternal predestination. God draws certain persons to Christ by sovereign, particular grace because He eternally chose them in Christ unto salvation. The others, although they are outwardly called by God, *seriously* called, God leaves in their unbelief and depravity, and even hardens, according to His eternal reprobation of them (cf. Acts 13:48; Rom. 9:14-23).

Does this make the PRC hyper-Calvinists in the thinking of the RCUS?

Surely the RCUS did not intend to besmirch the PRC with a veiled accusation of antinomism, an evil sometimes associated with hyper-Calvinism. Antinomism is rejection



of the law of God as the rule of life for the redeemed. In humility before God, I may say (the RCUS having forced me to speak as a fool) that the Reformed world in North America knows of the zeal that the PRC have for the "third use of the law," that is, the holy life of the saints, and of the

diligence of the PRC to discipline impenitent transgressors.

Nevertheless, the RCUS labels the PRC hyper-Calvinists.

Why?

The RCUS ought to demonstrate the charge.

In the world, among the unjust, condemnation requires a hearing and the producing of evidence.

All the more is this the requirement of brotherliness between churches alike professing to be Reformed. □

—DJE

## Letters

### ■ Continuing Dialog on Mysticism

Concerning Prof. Hanko's review of my book, *Mysticism: An Evangelical Option?*, in the December 1, 1991 *Standard Bearer*, I do want to thank you for your analysis and your good comments. You appear to have caught the gist of much of what I am trying to communicate, and I appreciate your endorsement of those ideas.

You correctly observe that I do not define faith "carefully," in this study; in fact, I do not define it at all in the book. Having read your comments, I do wish I had, but, just as I did not specify my Christology or soteriology in all respects, I did not realize the need to be more careful to work out my understanding of faith in this context. I certainly find the notion of faith as a *feeling* as hair-raising as you do. I would agree with you completely that faith is a matter of trust and assent (cf. my comments in *Handmaid to Theology*, Baker, 1981, pp. 71-75); feelings are just feelings — sometimes God gives them, sometimes he does not; feelings are not faith, and can never be such.

If you will double-check my statements of disparagement of a *purely* rational Christianity, the contrast is not to a Christianity based on feelings without rational basis, but to the work of God in our lives apart from mediation by any of our faculties at all. My point is that, once we have received Christ by faith, He works in our lives directly as agent — sometimes apart from our cognition, let alone from our feelings. I don't know if that strikes you as more orthodox; I realize it may not. I would enjoy continuing to dialog with you on this matter.

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### I Asked the Lord

I asked the Lord that I might grow  
In faith, and love, and every grace,  
Might more of His salvation know,  
And seek more earnestly His face.

'Twas He who taught me thus to pray,  
And He, I trust, has answered prayer;  
But it has been in such a way  
As almost drove me to despair.

I hoped that in some favoured hour  
At once He'd answer my request;  
And, by His love's constraining power,  
Subdue my sins, and give me rest.

Instead of this, He made me feel  
The hidden evils of my heart,  
And let the angry powers of hell  
Assault my soul in every part.

Yea, more, with His own hand He seemed  
Intent to aggravate my woe,  
Crossed all the fair designs I schemed,  
Blasted my gourds, and laid me low.

"Lord, why is this?" I trembling cried,  
"Wilt Thou pursue Thy worm to  
death?"

"'Tis in this way," the Lord replied,  
"I answer prayer for grace and faith.

"These inward trials I employ,  
From self and pride to set thee free,  
And break thy schemes of earthly joy,  
That thou mayest seek thy all in Me."

John Newton, 1725-1807



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*A Cloud Of  
Witnesses*  
Prof. Herman Hanko

# Ulrich Zwingli: Swiss Reformer (2)

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(Note: In the last article, we began to discuss Zwingli's work as a reformer. We continue that discussion now.)

## Zwingli the Reformer

The Reformation spread through Switzerland in a way different from the spread of the Reformation in any other land. Upon a petition from a reformer or a group of reformers, the ruling Council of a Swiss city would order a disputation to which the public was invited. Reformers and Roman Catholic theologians would carry on the disputation by debating a specific matter of reform. In every instance where a disputation was held, the Council in charge made the rule that the disputation had to be conducted on the basis of the Scriptures alone. This put the Roman Catholics at a decided disadvantage, for there

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*"Christ is the only way  
to salvation  
to all who were, who are,  
who shall be." —Zwingli*

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were very few theologians of note who knew anything about the Scriptures, while the reformers had studied them intensely. Further, it is obvious to any one that those Romish practices against which the Reformers protested simply cannot be supported by Scripture in any way.

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The first disputation in Zurich ended in a complete victory for Zwingli and his fellow reformers, and the Council instructed Zwingli "to continue to preach the holy gospel as heretofore, and to proclaim the true, divine Scriptures."

Just prior to the disputation, Zwingli had published 67 articles of faith. This document is an important historical document because it constitutes the earliest declaration of the Reformed faith. A few articles will indicate some of the basic beliefs of Zwingli.

All who say that the gospel is nothing without the approbation of the Church, err and cast reproach upon God.

The sum of the gospel is that our Lord Jesus Christ, the true Son of God, has made known to us the will of his heavenly Father, and redeemed us by his innocence from eternal death, and reconciled us to God.

Therefore Christ is the only way to salvation to all who were, who are, who shall be.

Christ is the head of all believers who are his body; but without him the body is dead.

All who live in this Head are his members and children of God. And this is the Church, the communion of saints, the bride of Christ, the *Ecclesia catholica*.

Christ is our righteousness. From this it follows that our works are good so far as they are Christ's, but not good so far as they are our own.

These truths are now very familiar to us, but if one will only think of writing them in the context of 1000 years of papal error, it will give him a sense of how great a work of God was performed in the Reformation.

With the Reformation firmly established in Zurich, it quickly spread to other parts of Switzerland. From Zurich it spread to Glarus, Schaffhausen, Appenzell, and the city of St. Gall. The spread continued when the leading canton of Bern adopted Reformation principles and proceeded to introduce them into the cantons of Vaud, Neuchâtel and Geneva — where Calvin was later to do his great work. In every case the Reformation came by way of a leading reformer working closely with Zwingli, and by a Disputation ordered by the Council. Of interest are the ten theses or Conclusions adopted as a confession of faith in Bern. They read in part:

The holy Christian Church, whose only Head is Christ, is born of the Word of God, and abides in the same ....

The Church of Christ makes no laws and commandments without the Word of God....

Christ is the only wisdom, righteousness, redemption, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world....

The mass as now in use, in which Christ is offered to God the Father for the sins of the living and the dead, is contrary to the Scripture. . . .

As Christ alone died for us, so he is also to be adored as the only Mediator and Advocate between God the Father and the believers.

Scripture knows nothing of purgatory....

The worship of images is contrary to Scripture.

All to the glory of God and his holy Word.

The high water mark of the Swiss Reformation was reached in 1530 when Zurich, Bern, Basel and most of north and east Switzerland were Re-



formed and no longer Roman Catholic.

Two important events, in addition to his reformatory work, belong to this period in Zwingli's life.

The first was the controversy with the Anabaptists.

Anabaptism arose in Zurich during Zwingli's work there. It was a grievous threat to the well-being of the Reformation, for it was not only a doctrinal departure from the truth of Scripture, but it was, in some branches of the movement, a radical movement opposed to the authority of the magistrate and intent on setting up a kingdom of heaven upon earth.<sup>1</sup> Zwingli and his followers were fiercely opposed to Anabaptism, as well they might be. But the secular magistracy, in cooperation with the Reformers, persecuted the Anabaptists severely, banishing them, imprisoning them, and in some instances, drowning them. Anabaptism continued to be a threat to the Reformation throughout the rest of the 16th century.

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### *God uses the struggles and trials of the church for good.*

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As always, God uses the struggles and trials of the church for good. Though Anabaptism was a serious threat to the Reformation, it was the immediate occasion for the Swiss reformers to begin the development of covenant theology. In defense of the truth of infant baptism over against Anabaptism, the great truth of the covenant was set forth by Zwingli and later by other Swiss theologians. We who so deeply cherish the truth of the covenant do not look, in the first place, to Calvin as our spiritual father in this doctrine, but to

Zwingli and the Swiss who worked with him.

The other event of note was the Marburg Colloquy, held in the city of Marburg in 1529. Because of the threat of a united Roman Catholicism and the armies of Charles V, the Elector of Saxony and the Landgrave of Hesse wanted to unite all the Protestants in a common cause. To accomplish this, the differences between Lutheranism and the Swiss theologians had to be taken away. The Marburg Colloquy was called for this purpose.

Luther, Melancthon, and other German theologians were there. Zwingli and his colleagues in the Swiss reformation were there. Calvin did not come. It did not take very long to discover that the reformers from Germany and Switzerland were agreed on all matters except the doctrine of the presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper—the Lutherans maintaining their view of consubstantiation, and the Swiss maintaining their position. Luther was harsh and unyielding. A story has it that he wrote in the dust on the table in front of him: "This is my body," so that he would not forget his insistence that the real body and blood of Christ were present in the sacramental elements.

When agreement proved impossible, the Swiss delegates wanted to extend the hand of fellowship to the German theologians, but were rebuffed with the cold and cutting remark of Luther: "Your spirit is different from ours." Even Zwingli's tearful expression of respect and love for Luther could gain little more from the unbending reformer than a brief expression of regret that he had sometimes spoken overly harshly.

Unity among Protestants was impossible.

### **Zwingli's Death**

It is not difficult to understand that the Roman Catholics were not about to see Switzerland become entirely Protestant without some kind of opposition.

This opposition began by severe persecution of Protestants in those cantons that remained Roman Catho-

lic. One Protestant was even burned alive. To relieve their oppressed and martyred brethren, the Protestant cantons were prepared to go to war with the Roman Catholic countrymen, forgetting the words of Jesus Himself: "They that fight with the sword, perish with the sword."

The story is quickly told. In 1529 the Roman Catholics were in no military shape to wage war and so sued for peace. Zwingli urged strongly against peace and gloomily predicted that if the Protestants did not take the opportunity to fight the Roman Catholics when victory was almost assured, they would eventually lose. He proved to be right.

The Roman Catholics used the peace given to strengthen themselves and prepare for war. A blockade, imposed on the Roman Catholic provinces by the Protestants, and which caused much suffering and even starvation, goaded the Roman Catholics to go to war in 1531. In this battle the Protestants were decisively defeated, and Zwingli, who had insisted on going along with his troops as their chaplain, was killed.

Zwingli was stooping to console a dying soldier when he was struck on the head with a stone. He managed to rise once more, but repeated blows and a thrust from a lance left him dying. Seeing his wounds, he cried out: "What matters this misfortune? They may kill the body, but they cannot kill the soul." For the rest of the day he lay under a pear tree, hands folded as in prayer and eyes fixed upon heaven. Towards evening a few stragglers of the victorious army asked him to confess his sins to a priest. He shook his head to indicate his refusal. But after a bit one of the men, in the light of his torch, recognized him and killed him with the sword, shouting, "Die, obstinate heretic!"<sup>2</sup>

The soldiers, joyful at his death, quartered his body for treason,

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<sup>1</sup>For more information on the Anabaptists, cf. the special Reformation Day issue of the *Standard Bearer* of October 15, 1991.

<sup>2</sup>See Schaff, *History of the Christian Church* for details.



burned the pieces for heresy, mixed the ashes with the ashes of pigs, and scattered them to the four winds.

So died one of God's faithful witnesses.

The spread of the Reformation in Switzerland was halted.

### Zwingli's Importance

Zwingli was, in some respects, an anomaly. On the one hand, he was a reformer faithful to the Scriptures. He insisted on the sole authority of Scripture before Luther raised his voice in Scripture's defense. He taught emphatically salvation in Christ alone and in His perfect sacrifice. He em-

phasized strongly the truth of sovereign and eternal predestination and preached it from the pulpit. He correctly and vigorously opposed all the Romish practices contrary to Scripture. He was instrumental in laying the foundation for the beginnings of covenant theology.

But, on the other hand, he never quite shook free from his humanism. He held to the end his notion that heathen men of renown could be saved. He taught that all children in the world who die in infancy go to heaven. And he continued to his last breath to admire Erasmus, that humanistic enemy of the Reformation.

And, in his opposition to Romish masses, he went to the opposite extreme and taught that the Lord's Supper is nothing but a memorial feast, and that Christ's presence in the bread and wine are not different from the presence of one we love whose photograph we cherish and by which photograph we remember our loved one, but who has, nevertheless, gone on to heaven.

Ulrich Zwingli's place in the Reformation was to prepare the way for a purification of the Reformation in Switzerland where Calvinism finally developed and flourished. □

## *In His Fear* Mr. Fred Hanko

# Grades and Report Cards

So here it's report card time again. This is a hard time for teachers (ignoring for the moment that it's also, often, a hard time for parents and students.) It's not just that there's a lot of work connected with averaging all those numbers so that I can put all those letters on the cards. What makes it hard is all the concern that goes along with those little letters. Every teacher wants to make those letters as fair and honest a reflection as possible of the performance of the student.

The letter grade system was originally set up with the intent that the letter C represented the performance of the average student when he was working well. This sounds really good in theory, but has not worked out so well in practice. Part of the problem is that of identifying the average student. Then the average stu-

dent had a disconcerting way of being average in only a single or a few subjects and non-average in others, or even of being average at one time and not at others.

Letter grades below C are relatively rare for primary and elementary students. This is due to the fact that the material in those grades is taught for mastery. The intention is that every student learn the skill or the facts being taught. In those grades the teacher can't be satisfied until every student has learned how to read and every student has learned the addition facts or the multiplication tables. Since every student should have mastered the material, the grades represent the ease of mastery and somewhat the degree of mastery.

When the student moves into middle school, his grades are more nearly a reflection of the degree of skill he has attained or the percentage of the facts that he has mastered. Mastery is still necessary as far as possible in mathematics and in at least certain areas of the other subjects, but we expect more variation

among the students in the quantity of material that they have learned. In the higher grades, then, the performance of the students is measured more easily and accurately in percents which are translated into letter grades.

Some parents wonder why their child, who received consistently high marks in the primary grades, now receives lower marks. This is often due to the fact that the teaching is no longer being done for mastery of all students. Nearly all students receive grades of C or higher in the lower grades, while the distribution is broader in the higher grades.

Some would say, "Why not teach for mastery in all grades? Why not teach so that everybody, regardless of ability, can get an A if he works hard." Good as it sounds, there are several reasons why this doesn't work very well. One important reason is that we would have to progress much more slowly than we do now and would teach much less material. While this might be nice for the slower students, the average and more able stu-

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dents would not receive the education they are able to master. Then these students would be short-changed. Another reason that lowered standards would not work is that all students would work even less. I have tried a number of times to teach some material more slowly and spend more time in explanation and practice. I have found that there is very little difference in the distribution of grades. Because the work was easier, everybody worked less, and most learned even less than before.

I think it's important that the grades we give students have real meaning and are not given just to make students feel good. The students themselves are quick enough to recognize cheap grades and to take advantage of them. Giving everyone good marks only devalues the marks and, like the devaluation of currency, makes them worthless. Both students and parents are entitled to know exactly what the students' performance is as compared to others. It is important to them in making decisions about their future in advanced education or career. Because the devaluation of grades has happened in some grade schools and high schools, it has been done in some colleges as well. Soon the diplomas become meaningless.

The greatest problem of all with marks and report cards comes from the fact that we don't interpret correctly their meaning and don't use them properly. Consider some of these cases from the past:

There was a student who was extremely intelligent. He rarely got any grade lower than a straight A and became quite upset when it did occur. Looking with pride upon his own abilities, he gave me no pleasure from the "good" marks he received. He was greatly admired by his parents and relatives who reported with awe to all who would listen the young man's distinguished college career. The last I heard of him he had left the church and was determined to gain wealth and fame in the world. The church of God will not benefit from his great intelligence.

I knew another young man also

having great intelligence. He reported proudly to all others that he "never cracked a book." He often laughed at those who worked hard; he was perfectly content with the better-than-average grades he could get by working as little as possible. Proud of his abilities as if he had received them because of his superior qualities, he could boast of his intelligence but was unable to show any accomplishments resulting from it. He got "good marks" in school, but his teachers had no pleasure in giving them to him.

Oh, I have known a few students who were especially talented but were yet able to escape the snares of pride or laziness. They were willing to work hard beyond the demands of assignments they could handle easily. They recognized the fact that from those to whom much is given much is also required. They have been willing to devote their talents to the benefit of the people of God. Such people are rare. My experience has been that those who are rich in talents, like those who are rich in material possessions, hardly enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

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*"Good grades"  
are any grades that are  
the result of the student's  
best efforts.*

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I have known many students who have worked hard to get the grades they have received. They have been diligent in their efforts to gain the knowledge and skills they have been taught. Because they have been diligent, they have also learned valuable habits of regular study, organization, and effort. Some of them having average abilities have earned better-than-average grades. Some, having lesser abilities, have worked very hard just to earn passing grades. Whatever grades such students get, those are good grades, indicating that they have learned not only the things they have been taught but also the habits that will make them successful

in other activities as well. Chances are that such students have attitudes as well that will make their abilities useful to themselves and to the community of believers.

The point of all this is that we need to adjust our own attitudes and values toward the performance of our children and the marks that are given to indicate that performance. We need to get rid of several false ideas: "My marks show that I am better than you are." "He gets good marks. The teacher must like him." "I got these bad marks because the teacher doesn't like me." And we need to promote proper attitudes toward grades. A student's grades are no indication of his value as a person. "Good grades" are any grades that are the result of the student's best efforts. A student's abilities are a measure of his responsibilities rather than of his importance. □

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*Decency and Order*  
Rev. Ron Cammenga

# Prayer at the Assemblies

*The proceedings of all assemblies shall begin by calling upon the name of God and be closed with thanksgiving.*

*Church Order, Article 32*

## An Article of Long Standing

Article 32 calls for prayer at the beginning and conclusion of all ecclesiastical assemblies. This kind of article has had a place in Reformed church orders as far back as that adopted by the Synod of Emden in 1571:

When they have thus gathered, the minister of that place, or if there is none, the one who presided in the last meeting, shall lead in prayer to choose a president, and a vice president, and a clerk. The president, having been chosen, shall lead in prayer concerning the whole agenda....

The *Church Order* of Emden called for two prayers at the beginning of every major assembly. There was to be an opening prayer, either by the minister of the convening church or, in case the church were vacant, by the last president, which prayer should be offered with a view to the election of officers. After the election of officers, the newly chosen president was to lead the assembly in prayer once again, this time asking God's blessing on the assembly's work. The Synod of Emden said nothing about a closing prayer of thanksgiving.

The Synod of Middelburg, 1581,

combined the two opening prayers and added the provision for a closing prayer of thanksgiving. Our present Article 32 is essentially the provision adopted by Middelburg.

## Prayer at "All Assemblies"

Officebearers must be men of prayer. They must be men of prayer in their personal lives; they must be men of prayer especially in their work in the office of Christ. No minister can carry out the work of the ministry apart from prayer and being constant in prayer. No elder can rule in the church of Jesus Christ without continually betaking himself to the throne of God's grace for the strength and wisdom to carry out the duties of his office. No deacon can engage in the work and make the difficult decisions that deacons must make without receiving God's grace and guidance through prayer.

As much as it is necessary for the individual officebearers to pray, so much is it also necessary that the assemblies of officebearers pray. The work of the assemblies is too great! The responsibilities of the assemblies too solemn! The delegates at the assemblies too weak!

The reason why our *Church Order* includes an article requiring prayer at the assemblies is to create an awareness that the ecclesiastical assemblies must labor in conscious dependence upon God. The ecclesiastical assemblies are not mere business meetings, gatherings of the executives of some earthly corporation. The assemblies are the meeting of the officebearers of Christ's church. The assemblies are met to do the work of Christ's church. As such, they depend upon the Head

of the church, Jesus Christ. In Psalm 127:1 we are reminded that "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it." In James 1:5 we are exhorted, "If any of you lack wisdom (and we all do by nature), let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given." According to Acts 1:24, at the time that the apostles chose a successor to Judas Iscariot, before they cast their lots, they first offered up prayer to God.

But then we must be sure that such prayers are very consciously made in the awareness that without the Lord's blessing the proceedings of our assemblies cannot prosper. Such prayers must never become a matter of mere custom, the mere following of a rule.

The "assemblies" referred to by the article would include the meetings of the consistory. Consistory meetings must be opened and ended with prayer. This would also apply to the elders' meetings and the deacons' meetings. Of the deacons' meetings, this is specifically required in *Church Order*, Article 40: "The deacons shall meet, wherever necessary, every week to transact the business pertaining to their office, calling upon the Name of God...." Article 32 would also have application to the local congregational meetings.

Included in the "assemblies" would also be the broader ecclesiastical assemblies: classis and synod.

## The Nature of these Prayers

Generally, the prayers offered up at our assemblies are free prayers, that is, they are prayers prayed extemporaneously. Nevertheless, it is

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significant that liturgical prayers have been written for the ecclesiastical assemblies. *The Psalter Hymnal* includes opening and closing prayers for the assemblies that date back to the time of the Reformation.

#### Opening Prayer for Ecclesiastical Assemblies

Heavenly Father, eternal and merciful God: It has pleased Thee according to Thy infinite wisdom and lovingkindness to gather a Church unto Thy self out of the peoples of all the earth, and to govern Thy Church through the service of men. Thou hast graciously called us to this office of government, and hast enjoined us to watch over ourselves and to bestow due care upon the flock which Christ purchased with His precious blood.

We are now assembled in this place in Thy holy Name, in order to deal, after the fashion of the apostolic churches, with such matters as shall come before us and concern the edification and welfare of Thy churches, agreeably to our office. We confess that we are unworthy and unable of ourselves to accomplish any good thing. We beseech Thee, therefore, faithful God and Father, that, in accordance with Thy promise, Thou wilt abide in the midst of the present assembly through Thy Holy Spirit, and that He may lead us into all the truth.

Remove all misunderstandings and guard us against the influence of our sinful hearts. Grant that Thy Word may be our only rule and standard, in order that our deliberations may redound to the glory of Thy Name, the edification of Thy churches, and the peace of our own consciences.

This we ask in the Name of Christ Jesus, Thy Son, who with Thee and the Holy Spirit, the only and true God, is deserving of eternal praise and glory. AMEN.

#### Closing Prayer for Ecclesiastical Assemblies

Lord God, heavenly Father, we thank Thee from our hearts that it pleases Thee to gather a Church in our land and to employ our services to that end. Thou dost graciously so order all things that we can preach the gospel without any hindrance

and may engage in public worship. Thou hast also been present with Thy Holy Spirit in our assembly, guiding our deliberations according to Thy will, and binding our hearts together in mutual peace and unity.

Wilt Thou, O faithful God and Father, graciously bless the efforts that we purpose to put forth, and wilt Thou finish in power the work which Thou hast begun. Continue to gather unto Thyself a true Church, and cause it to preserve the purity of doctrine; guide it in the proper use of the holy sacraments; and inspire it with zeal for the maintenance of church purity.

Bring to nought all wicked and subtle counsels that are devised against Thy Word and Church. Give strength to all whom Thou hast placed in authority over Thy Church, to the end that they may preach Thy Word in faithfulness and steadfastness.

Strengthen the civil magistrates of Thy people, in order that they may wield the sword of worldly power in justice and with wise restraint. In particular do we pray for the civil rulers, both higher and lower officers of government, whom Thou hast been pleased to appoint over us. We commend unto Thee especially the esteemed council of this city. Grant that their rule may be entirely directed toward the supremacy of the King of kings over rulers and ruled alike. May through their labors the shameful and wicked dominion of Satan be increasingly disturbed and broken down. May it be given unto us to lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and gravity.

Hear us, O God and Father, through Thy dear Son, Jesus Christ, who with Thee and the Holy Spirit, the only true God, is worthy of eternal praise and glory. AMEN.

Notice ought to be paid to the specific language of Article 32. The proceedings are to begin "by calling upon the name of God." This is to be a prayer of supplication. Its purpose is to implore God's guidance of the assembly in all the issues it must face and in all the decisions it must make. The proceedings shall be closed "with thanksgiving." This is fitting since the proceedings begin by asking Di-

vine guidance and blessing. It is proper that at the conclusion of the meetings gratitude be expressed to God for granting these.

#### Bible Reading, Singing, Devotional Addresses, and Sermons

Article 32 does not say anything about Bible reading, singing, devotional addresses, or sermons. This does not mean, of course, that these things have no place at our ecclesiastical gatherings. None of them may take the place of prayer, but along with prayer these also have their place.

Certainly, Scripture ought to be read, and there ought to be singing of the Psalms at appropriate times. There is also a place for devotional addresses at the beginning of the classis meetings. Classis West of our churches carries on this tradition, with the president of the previous classis delivering the address. Over the years these addresses have been greatly appreciated and they served well to set the proper tone for the meetings. These addresses ought not, of course, to be overly long and ought to be appropriate to the ecclesiastical gathering.

The "Rules of Order For the Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches in America" state: "On the Tuesday evening preceding the opening of Synod a prayer service, in charge of the convening Consistory, shall be held in the city in which Synod is to meet. The members of Synod are expected to attend this service in a body" (Article 1, 4).

#### Pre-service Prayers in Consistory

Article 32 does not prescribe pre-worship service prayers within the consistory, as is the tradition of the Reformed churches. Nevertheless, this is a worthy tradition.

This practice dates from the time of the Afscheiding of 1834. During the days of this secession movement in The Netherlands, congregational worship was often disrupted by government or by antagonistic citizens. Consistories began to feel the need for asking God's protection and blessing of the worship services, praying in particular for the needs of the minis-



ter. In The Netherlands the serving elder, that is, the elder who would lead the minister up to the pulpit, led also the pre-service consistory prayer.

We continue to follow this tradition in our own Protestant Reformed Churches. These prayers are generally offered up by the officebearers according to rotation.

From time to time complaints are heard concerning the length and content of these pre-service consis-

tory prayers. Occasionally the pre-service consistory prayers take on the form of mini-congregational prayers; an attempt is made to bring all the needs of the congregation before the throne of God in prayer. This is not the time or the place for that kind of prayer. The pre-service consistory prayer ought to be brief and to the point. God's blessing ought to be sought on the worship service. Supplication ought to be made for the

minister that he may be given the strength to lead the worship service and preach the Word in truth to the edification of the congregation. Supplication ought to be made for the consistory especially in its supervision of the Word. Supplication ought to be made for the congregation that the worship given be in Spirit and in truth and that all have open ears to receive the preaching of the gospel. □

*Church and State*  
*Mr. James Lanting*

## School Choice Gains Momentum

### Public Funds and Private Education

Ever since the Bush Administration unveiled its "America 2000" program in the spring of 1991, the national debate over "school choice" has been escalating rapidly. In fact, many are predicting that school choice will soon eclipse abortion as the most controversial political, social, and church/state issue of this decade.

Engendered by growing frustration with the nation's notoriously inept public school monopoly, school choice was originally conceived to foster healthy competition between public schools by eliminating residency requirements and permitting parents to choose the best public school for their children. More recently, however, school choice has become identified with Education Secretary Lamont Alexander's proposal to revive the tuition voucher

concept. Distributed to parents, these vouchers would be used at the school of the parents' choice, including private and parochial schools, thereby potentially funneling billions in tax money to private and parochial schools. These "choice in education" proposals have fostered intense debate over the church/state issues raised whenever government tax monies are channeled into private and parochial institutions.

### Impetus From Wisconsin

The choice movement gained some momentum this past spring when the Wisconsin supreme court ruled that Milwaukee's "Parental Choice Program" passed constitutional scrutiny, even though it allows inner-city children to use state funds to attend private, "non-sectarian" schools. This landmark decision marks the first time a high court has allowed poor families to use state education money to send their children to non-public schools.

Some of the proponents of the Milwaukee program predicted that this court victory will create a nationwide grassroots movement to revo-

lutionize public education in America. Although such predictions may be exaggerated, it is clear that support for the concept of school choice is growing.

### Choice Legislation

In addition, since 1991 over thirty states have introduced choice bills in their legislatures. Although few if any of these bills have become law, choice advocates are increasingly optimistic that many states will soon adopt some kind of voucher legislation. Indeed, state legislation may be more likely than federal funding, since Congress has frustrated the Bush administration by rejecting two recent modest attempts to add private school voucher plans to pending education bills. Both the House and Senate have as yet resisted the voucher concept in President Bush's America 200 program.

Nonetheless, the Department of Education has recently announced that it will continue to promote a "full-choice program" and predicted that 1993 will promise to be a good year for the President's education plan.

*Mr. Lanting, a member of South Holland Protestant Reformed Church, is a practicing attorney.*



## The Edison Project

Moreover, in the private sector, the concept of school choice gained considerable credibility early this summer when Benno Schmidt, the President of Yale University, resigned his position to head up the Edison Project. The Edison Project is a for-profit business venture which envisions ownership and operation of a nationwide chain of innovative schools jointly owned by media mogul Chris Whittle and Time Warner Corporation. The new company has already attracted investment commitments in excess of \$60 million. The Edison Project company anticipates establishing about 100 for-profit grammar schools by 1996 and facilities for more than two million students by the end of the decade. Tuition is estimated to be \$5,500 per student, which approximates the national average now spent in public schools. Although Whittle insists his Edison Project will not need federal funding, many suspect that the company anticipates and needs some form of state or federal aid vouchers to survive.

## Choice Opposition

Choice proposals are, however, facing formidable opposition on both the federal and state levels. Many detractors warn that a modest voucher or tax credit (of say \$2,000 per student) will only result in greater racial and economic segregation and less choice for the poor. This is because the underclass will continue to be economically excluded from the more attractive suburban schools where tuition costs typically exceed \$5,000 annually per student. Unable to pay the "gap" between the voucher and the actual tuition at the more affluent schools, the poor would remain locked in the inner-city schools.

Moreover, the choice voucher proposals face stiff resistance from watchdog groups such as the Americans United for the Separation of Church and State, who argue that such vouchers which funnel tax monies into private and parochial schools constitute a gross violation of the First Amendment prohibition against gov-

ernmental establishment of religion — a breach of the traditional "wall of separation" between church and state.

Additional opposition is being raised by the public educational establishment (such as the National Education Association), which argues that the demise of the existing public school system will result in greater inequities for the poor and racial minorities, and engender widespread confusion and chaos in education, at least during the lengthy transition period.

## Governmental Control

But in addition to the potential inequities and the church/state problems predicted by choice detractors, a more troublesome difficulty is the prediction that acceptance of vouchers will inevitably result in a loss of autonomy by private and parochial schools. A conservative Catholic educator recently noted that Catholic

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*... vouchers may be  
"the gift of the Trojan Horse"  
for non-public schools.*

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schools should be wary of Bush's proposal to give vouchers to "lawfully operated" non-public schools. Writing that many schools have already "bartered away their souls for government funds," this columnist warned that vouchers may be "the gift of the Trojan Horse" for non-public schools: "What will happen to the Catholic children of Roman Catholic parentage (large families, little financial resources) when parochial schools may be inundated by a majority of children whose parents have opted for the 'discipline' of Catholic schools, but share no similar religious values with the Catholic children in their formative years?"

Phyllis Schlafly is also critical of Bush's "America 2000" program, accusing the Administration of attempting to transform private schools into public institutions. A conservative California organization called Citi-

zens for Excellence in Education (CEE) also recently warned that Bush's Choice program may well bring non-public schools under unwanted government scrutiny. In contrast, CEE boldly called for a voucher system devoid of government control or supervision.

This issue — whether tuition vouchers will inevitably be accompanied by loathsome government oversight over admissions, curriculum, and certification of parochial and private schools — is the fundamental and threatening unknown for choice proposals. Initial tuition voucher programs may well be accompanied by certain government assurances, but all parental Christian schools should monitor these choice developments very carefully, and zealously guard against a loss of autonomy which historically results from receipt of public funds. □

REMEMBER:

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## Taking Heed to the Doctrine

Rev. Bernard Woudenberg

# "A Declaration of Principles" and its Results

*Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand.*

I Corinthians 15:1

I remember well the Synod of 1950. Three friends and I had set out for a tour of the western states; and our first stop was Hull, Iowa where the synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches was meeting.

Much of the closeness and intimacy which had always characterized our small denomination still appeared to be there; but it was strained. Deep divisions had risen over our relationship to the Liberated churches, and they were growing. Groups were gathering everywhere, with each side defending its own position, and trying to win others to it. The experiences were painful. Families stood together over against long standing friends, and others were divided within themselves. In some instances households were torn, husbands from wives, and parents from their children. And over it all hung a wistful conviction that something must happen to heal these differences; surely a denomination so firmly built on doctrinal conviction could not be allowed to split.

The whole matter came to the

fore at the synod with the report of the Mission Committee. Two churches had been organized in Canada, one in Hamilton and one in Chatham; and with Rev. Andrew Cammenga now as missionary more were to be expected. But there was a snag. With the letter of Prof. Holwerda, and the reply, first of Rev. Ophoff and then of Rev. Hoeksema, the question was everywhere, did the Protestant Reformed Churches have a covenant view, and was it "binding" on our churches? Inquiries of interest were still being received from new immigrants all across the continent, and visits were being made; but no one would proceed any further without this question being answered.

It is this especially that I remember of that synod, the image of Rev. Cammenga pacing the floor in Hull church relating the frustrations he was meeting. He could work with the people. They were kind, and he got along fine. But they wouldn't take anything he said as final. He needed some kind of an official declaration as to the position of our churches, a form, perhaps, which could be used for the organization of churches. Without it he didn't know what he could do.

And so it was that the Mission Committee had come with a proposal, requesting just such a form, in their words:

To adopt the following clear-cut expression as one which should appear in each request for organization, along with the denial of common grace

and the Three points of 1924, and profession of adherence to the Three forms of Unity and the Church Order of Dordrecht and professing the Scriptures to be the infallible Word of God (as stands to reason): "The promise of the Gospel, both as to the will of God to save His people and the execution of His will to save them, is not general, that is, it does not include all the baptized children of the church, but is particular, that is, it pertains only to the elect of God." [Acts of Synod, 1950, p. 54]

For Rev. Hoeksema it was an opportunity to be grasped. His concern at that point was to go beyond the question of whether or not we would be organizing more congregations. It was not as though he had any objection to such work, or to working with immigrants from the Liberated churches or anywhere else. In fact, he had himself worked with the new people in Hamilton and Chatham, and had enjoyed it immensely. He had come to know these people well, and he respected their spirituality and discernment. But his concerns were running deeper than that. At stake, in his mind, was the very integrity of our churches.

There is in the tradition of Presbyterian/Reformed church government a principle which is basic to the whole system upon which it is built, a principle of primary dedication. That is to say, a Reformed denomination by virtue of its organization is committed to a basic doctrinal position, and all who join such a denomination are expected to honor it. Basically this commitment is found within the

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Reformed creeds; but because of the differences which do arise over the use and interpretation of the creeds, it may in effect become more specific than that.

Our own denomination is perhaps as good an illustration of that as any, particularly regarding special grace. In 1924 the Christian Reformed Church adopted the position that the grace of God is in certain instances common to all men, including the non-elect. It was a position to which our leaders could not agree, and so they were dismissed from the denomination. The result was that the Protestant Reformed denomination was formed. Naturally, therefore, it was understood that those who joined it recognized this originating commitment to special grace and would honor it. Or at least, should some have certain reservations, they would have to understand that they would worship under the preaching of this doctrine, and would not militate against it.

And so twenty-five years had passed, with this being understood by all. Churches had been formed, and a complete roster of ministers had been educated and prepared for the ministry under the instruction of Rev. Hoeksema and Rev. Ophoff in harmony with this principle. In fact, during that time a complete theology had been developed, carefully carrying the principle of special grace through from beginning to end, all on the basis of a firm exegetical foundation, and including a fresh and scripturally based doctrine of the covenant. All this had been learned and loved; and the strength of our churches was to be found in the fact that these doctrines were consistently held to by all. Now, suddenly, however, this was changing. As an aftermath of the visit of Dr. Schilder, and aggravated by Rev. Hoeksema's own illness, public agitation was arising which sought to compromise this very starting principle. Questions and doubts were being heard everywhere, and relatively few seemed to appreciate the seriousness of it all.

The problem was not that Rev.

Hoeksema could not stand disagreement or opposition. He knew that such could be expected; and he had always been ready to meet it, as long as it was openly and honestly set forth on the basis of sound biblical argumentation. In fact, it was this that he had expected and would have liked when he first began to work with Dr. Schilder and the Liberated churches. He had realized that there were great and important differences between us; but he had expected, knowing Dr. Schilder as personally as he did, that they would be treated in open and forthright discussion, such as had been denied both of them when they were ejected from their respective denominations. And so he looked forward to free and profitable discussion on the pages of the *Standard Bearer*, and their church paper as well, the *Reformation*. These then could possibly be followed by personal conferences here and there, to the benefit of all. And through it all he had certainly assumed that the young men whom he and Rev. Ophoff had prepared for the ministry would support what they had learned, and participate in developing it to the advantage of everyone. But that was not what happened.

The first disappointment, and perhaps the greatest, was that the Liberated churches showed no particular interest in doctrinal discussion. Their only action was to propose an immediate sister-church relationship in which ministers could be exchanged back and forth across the ocean, to Rev. Hoeksema's mind a proposal of questionable wisdom, considering the doctrinal differences that were sure to come out. It was more apt to aggravate than bring together. But even more disconcerting was the fact that, while the Dutch theologians remained silent, it was our own men who began to suggest that our theological positions might not be that important, and we could perhaps learn more from the theologians across the sea, and all that in spite of the fact that much of what they were saying seriously contradicted the very principles upon which our denomination was founded. They

were teaching a grace of God which is common to everyone baptized in the church without distinction between elect and reprobate, inasmuch as it comes in a promise which is conditionally given to all. Clearly it stood in contradiction to the position we had always taken; and yet it was our own men, most of whom had lived personally through our painful separation from our mother church, who were suggesting that these views could be given serious consideration. It was, whether recognized or not, as though the very integrity of our history was being called into question, and that by those who should have been most committed to its distinctives.

And so it was that this request for a form of organization for new churches provided a prime opportunity. It allowed for the laying out without rancor, judgment, or personal accusation the very principles upon which all were expected to stand, and that in distinction from those of both the Christian Reformed Church in our country and the Liberated churches in The Netherlands. If these principles could be accepted as the starting position, and discussed openly and with mutual respect, the possibility of future work together had real possibility; and, if not, the possibility of further interaction between us and them was indeed dim.

Thus it was that, within a few days, Rev. Hoeksema, working with the committee appointed for this purpose, produced what was called and is now known as "The Declaration of Principles."

We as a foursome of young college students, perhaps somewhat naively, listened to the first reading of these principles and went on our way presuming that no one would be likely to have any difficulty with them. After all, they were nothing more than had always been taught and accepted within our churches. Who could question that?

And it was not until, a few weeks later, we reached our churches in California that we discovered such was not to be. □



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*The Day of  
Shadows*  
Rev. John Heys

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# A Gracious Revelation of Divine Mercy

"It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy." That we read in Romans 9:16 in connection with the truth presented in the preceding verses.

In this New Testament chapter the awesome truth presented in the Old Testament, and in regard to the love of God "which is in Christ Jesus our Lord," is held before us here by the apostle Paul. He presents the truth which we considered last time in this department of the Day of Shadows. Paul presents the truth in Christ, and emphatically declares that he does not lie. What is more, he expresses the heaviness of his heart because of what happened to some who were called Israelites, who were such in the physical sense but not in the spiritual sense.

He refers to the fact that although Esau was in the physical sense a descendant of Isaac, and therefore an Israelite as a descendant of Abraham, not he, Esau, but his brother Jacob is, according to election, Prince of God, as implied in the name Israel. Indeed there are many striking things presented to us in the day of shadows.

Although the almighty God chose Jacob, his father Isaac chose Esau, because he was the firstborn of these twins. We do here have a reflection of what was revealed, namely, that the very first child born to mankind, namely, Cain, the son of Adam

and Eve, is not presented as an elect child of God. But his brother Abel revealed himself very plainly, by his proper sacrifice, to be the one God chose and caused to be born as His covenant child.

What is striking in the account is the reaction of Isaac to the manifestation that Jacob should receive the covenant blessing. Isaac — and he had reason for doing so, since Esau was the firstborn of those twins — intended to pronounce the covenant blessing upon Esau, and not on Jacob. His wife, Rebekah, according to Genesis 25:28 loved Jacob, while Isaac loved Esau. This may also be the case because of their physical appearance. Esau appeared to be a physically strong man, and a vigorous son. He was a cunning hunter, a man of the field; while Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in tents (Gen. 25:27). This, but also the fact that he, Esau, was the firstborn son of the two twins, explains why Isaac intended to pronounce on him the covenant blessing.

However, the striking thing revealed to us in Genesis, but also in Romans 9, is that Isaac did bow before God's will and decree. He, not only as presented in Genesis 27:37-40, but also in Genesis 28:1-4, bowed before God's will, and in no way and to no degree tried to bring any part of that covenant blessing upon Esau, when God revealed to him that Jacob had been blessed, and that there was nothing of a covenant blessing left for Esau. And Isaac, agreeing with his wife Rebekah, blessed Jacob and charged him not "to take a wife of the daughters of Canaan," but to go to Padan-Aram to get a wife from his

mother's relatives. This Isaac did because his wife, Rebekah, advised him to have Jacob get a wife that believed in God. In Genesis 28:8 we read that Esau, knowing that it did not please his father for him to get a Canaanitish wife, who would definitely be an unbeliever, went to the house of Ishmael to get his wife. For Ishmael was a son of Abraham through Hagar.

So Jacob left his father and mother and twin brother and went to where his mother had been born. He, Isaac, told Jacob to go and get a believing wife. But, first of all, behind this mission was his mother's fear that Esau would kill Jacob. For she had been told that Esau planned to slay Jacob as soon as his father died (Gen. 27:42-45). She told Jacob what Esau intended to do, and that when the fury of his brother passed away she would "send and fetch" Jacob from thence.

Surely we have here a fulfillment of that Mother Promise in Genesis 3:15. Here was enmity between Jacob, the seed of the woman, and Esau, the seed of the serpent. And the seed of the serpent openly and boldly revealed his enmity and intention to crush the heel of the seed of the woman. What is more, this intention of Esau reveals what lies ahead for us. What in the Old Testament, namely in Genesis 3:15, is called the seed of the serpent, and is here manifested in Esau, can correctly be called the antichristian forces, which will try to wipe off the face of this earth all those who are the spiritual seed of Jacob, and are beautifully called Christians, as we read in Acts 11:26.

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Protestant Reformed Churches.*



Esau hated Jacob and intended to kill him, so that he would get the inheritance and possessions of his father. He did not kill Jacob; but he intended to do so in order to get worldly possessions, not God's blessing. That reveals what lies ahead for the seed of the woman, God's elect people. What lies ahead Isaac declared to Jacob when he, at Rebekah's advice, said to him, "God Almighty bless thee ... and give thee the blessings of Abraham" (Gen. 29:3, 4).

It is true that Esau, because he got so wealthy, and his flesh was pleased with and delighted in the things of this world, did not try to kill Jacob. For God keeps His covenant promises to His church, and will save every one of His elect from physical death until he has been born again, until the body of Christ is perfect, and until His church has all its members in their places in that body of Christ which He eternally designed.

Jacob goes as commanded by his father to get a wife out of the church and not out of the world. It was a painful trip and required a slow walk where he had never been before. He would be leaving the promised land, and leaving behind all the earthly material that was promised him by his father. This pictured the truth that all of God's people will, when Christ returns, receive a glorious, wonderful life in a creation of which this present world is only a picture, and which is a means of serving the church to receive what God has promised in a sweet communion with Him.

What an awesome thing, then, when Jacob was all alone and was leaving the promised land. He left his father and mother behind. He had to flee from his twin brother. And he was, by his mother's efforts, going for a wife — not because he was eagerly looking for a marriage, but to be where his uncle, aunt, and cousins dwelt, and because his father told him not to take a wife of the daughters of Canaan.

We may believe that Jacob went with faith in God. He made a vow that, if God would help him on the way, and give him bread to eat and raiment to wear, so that he could

return unto his father in peace, the Lord would be his God. This was after the dream which God gave him. And we must indeed see God's almighty power and infinite wisdom, in order to have confidence and hope.

Our salvation is not given us because we wanted it. Take hold of the comforting truth of Scripture that we want salvation because God has already begun it in us. Our salvation is a gift, but not a gift we deserve because we asked for it and "accepted an invitation to receive it." *Every bit* of our salvation, including the desire for it, is a gift of God's mercy. And mercy is compassion and pity. It implies not only that one suffers, but also that all men deserve torment and everlasting punishment and have no right to receive one blessing.

We have that truth so clearly manifest in Jacob's life. And in the Old Testament times there is presented to us time and again some who are sinners but who do have God's mercy bestowed upon them. Mercy is an aspect of love. As David wrote in Psalm 23, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever." And Jacob, who lied to his father and deceived him, claiming to be Esau, deserved to be cast into hell at once! He did *not* deserve the birthright blessing which would be a shadow of what Christ has earned for us. Jacob's sin before his father was as serious as Adam and Eve's, when they ate a piece of forbidden fruit. It was rebelling against God, and it revealed that Satan got the whole human race to go against God, dying spiritually and coming into this life spiritually dead!

We have here in Jacob a shadow of what is everywhere in the world today, namely, that God saves sinners in His mercy, not because they deserve or to any degree desire to have it until God has already begun it in them by a spiritual rebirth. Jacob did not earn and deserve the birthright blessing any more than Esau, from whom it was completely kept. This incident in the life of Jacob reveals God's grace, which causes Him

to deal with some sinners in His mercy. We all deserve God's curse upon us; but He is eternally pleased to bring upon some of us His mercy.

Our God revealed that in the day that Adam and Eve fell into spiritual death. He told Satan that He would put enmity in some people's hearts against him, that is, Satan. He was not going to sell it to them. Dead people cannot buy a thing. He was not going to offer it to spiritually dead people. He will put it in those whom He eternally chose to be His people. He will have mercy — not offer it and wait to see whether we want it. Dead people want nothing! Read again that verse wherewith this article begins. God said that it is *not* of him that willeth, but of God that sheweth mercy (Rom. 9:16).

Therefore we must teach and maintain in humble thankfulness, "O God, how good Thou art to all the pure of heart, though life seems vain; burdened with anxious care, I groped in dark despair, till in Thy house of prayer, all was made plain" (Psalter # 204, based on Psalm 73). We must not, cannot, and cannot truthfully teach that we get the blessings of salvation because of what we did, because we fulfilled a condition which God presents to us. In His grace God gives us the right to blessings, by giving us Christ and all that He earned for us.

Jacob did not deserve covenant blessings any more than Esau did. Surely his work of deceit and lying called for the opposite of a blessing. But he got it in God's grace, and through it received works of God's mercy. We do not even deserve to have the gospel preached to us. But our God shows us here, in this day of shadows, His mercy and grace as a work of His love and kindness. What Paul wrote in Romans 9:13 is so very, very true. God said, "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." And, if you please, according to verse 11, "the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth; it was said unto her, The elder shall serve the



younger." And then comes that awesome truth that God *hated* Esau and loved Jacob before they were born, not after the way they lived.

Let that beautiful versification

of Psalm 139 once again be what your heart says:

All that I am I owe to Thee,  
Thy wisdom, Lord, hath fashioned me;

I give my Maker thankful praise,  
Whose wondrous works my soul amaze. □

## Book Reviews

*Far Above Rubies: Today's Virtuous Woman*, edited by Herman Hanko; Reformed Free Publishing Association, 1992; 187 pp., \$9.95, paper. [Reviewed by Rev. Dale H. Kuiper.]

The latest offering of the R.F.P.A. is a compilation of eleven sermons, speeches, pamphlets, and magazine articles by five ministers and three professors from the Protestant Reformed Churches. Editor Hanko has also included four articles of charming simplicity by Abraham Kuyper from his popular book, *When Thou Sittest in Thine House*. As the subtitle of the book indicates, the subject of all this writing is the woman — more particularly, "today's virtuous woman."

Several words come to mind as one reads through these chapters: timely, biblical, consistent, practical, and positive. *Timely* because the place of the woman in marriage, the home, the church, and society needs definition today. *Biblical* because only God may, can, and does define these important roles. *Consistency* is itself a ruby because it is rare that across a denomination and its seminary a unified, certain sound is sent forth. The great need is for the *practical* application of the Scriptural givens, so that a woman's daily problems are addressed and she knows where to turn and how to behave. Believing women are not only informed what they are not to be doing, but are in every chapter encouraged *positively* in the calling whereunto God calls them. A few

chapter headings will whet the appetite: "A Virtuous Woman," "Children in Marriage," "The Calling of the Truly Liberated Woman," "Women in Church Office."

A couple of criticisms come to mind. Perhaps it is inevitable with a compilation such as this that there is a degree of overlapping or repetition in the articles. In several chapters the same biblical passages are treated, identical arguments are made, and the same examples employed. While this results in some reinforcement of the reader in the biblical positions, it does become tedious if several chapters are read in one sitting. Perhaps it would be best to read the book over a period of time.

The second matter that we question is the elevating of the place and work of the woman to such exalted heights that the labors of others are made all but insignificant. For example, the work of "mothers in the home is an everlasting work. From a certain point of view, it is the only work that will ever endure" (p. 72). The work of artists and craftsmen, etc., will not endure; "there is one great work that will not be removed, but shall endure, and that is the life of the child who has been formed and molded by believing hands" (p. 82). We are of the conviction that all the labors of every child of God are kingdom labors, that none of them are in vain, and that God is faithful to reward every one of them in time and in eternity. Among those labors of the faithful are those performed by believing women in the home. With the

thoughts that a mother's work is of great significance, and that the work is one which only she can perform, we heartily concur!

This book ought to be in every Christian home. The older girls and young women should read it to learn what they are called by God *to be*. The older women should read it to discover what they should be *teaching* by word and example. The young men must read these things to know what to *look for* in a wife. The older men should also read it, that they might know what to *guard against* and what to *stand for* in the home and church. A profitable book, then; one that the Holy Spirit will surely use to bring forth fruit in the home and in the church of God's Son. ■

*Women in the Maze: Questions & Answers on Biblical Equality*, by Ruth A. Tucker. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992. 276 pages. Paper. \$9.95. [Reviewed by the Editor.]

When evangelical and conservative churches ordain women as preachers and elders, one reason will be books such as this one. Ruth Tucker makes every effort to avoid the radical extremes of feminism and persuasively argues for full equality of men and women. For her, full equality means especially two things: women in every office that is open to men in the church and stripping husbands of authority over their wives in marriage. She has a passion for the cause:



"... we must seriously address the women's issue. Indeed, this is one of the most critical issues that confront the church today" (p. 10).

*Women in the Maze* takes the reader through all the areas of the feminist debate: the implications for the doctrine of God; the issue of headship at creation; patriarchy in the Old Testament; the teaching of the New Testament, including exegesis of the crucial passages; church history; and contemporary issues.

Like its cause, the book founders on one stubborn fact: Scripture forbids female officebearers in the New Testament church and requires the husband's authority in marriage and the family. I Timothy 2, 3 is decisive on the issue of female ministers and elders; Ephesians 5:22-33 is conclusive on the issue of the wife's being under her husband's authority in marriage.

There are two ways for "evangelical feminists" to resist the authority of God the Holy Spirit speaking in these passages. One is to charge the apostle with being mistaken, as a child of his time. This was the way chosen by Fuller Seminary's Paul K. Jewett.

Ruth Tucker chooses the second way of resistance. Professing allegiance to inspiration in the passages, she explains away the clear, obvious meaning with appeal to "hermeneutics."

Tucker's "interpretation" of I Timothy 2, 3 (pp. 112ff.) and of Ephesians 5:22-33 (pp. 126ff.) is pathetic. I Timothy 2:12 is said to mean that Paul temporarily forbade the women of the congregation to teach until they had learned more about the faith. When this had happened, he gladly suffered women to teach. His prohibition against the woman's "usurping authority" over the man in church was merely directed against her "domineering." As long as the woman would rule the man in the right way, the apostle had no objection. Headship in Ephesians 5 does not refer to authority at all. The husband is head of his wife only as her source. Besides, Tucker assures us, marriage has greatly changed since Paul's day.

When a feminist exegete will show me that a headship that is comparable to Christ's headship over the church (Eph. 5:23) and that demands subjection (v. 24) and reverence (v.

33) is, nevertheless, devoid of authority, I will begin to consider taking the feminist position seriously. When this exegete demonstrates that it is possible in Ephesians 5:22ff. to strip the husband's headship of all authority without robbing Jesus Christ of His authority over the church, and every member of the church, I will consider becoming a feminist myself.

As Ruth Tucker's high-handed, or cavalier, treatment of Holy Scripture indicates, it is impossible for anyone to be a moderate feminist. The movement is, essentially, a radical deviation from biblical Christianity. Despite her efforts to distance herself from her extremist sisters (and brothers), Tucker admits that she does not think it sinful to address God as "Mother"; alleges that the God who bars women from office only because of gender is a "chauvinist," that is, a sinner; and advocates a new view of the Christian family in which it is not the calling of the wife and mother to be a worker at home.

I recommend this book to our readers on the principle, "Know the enemy." □

## News from Our Churches

Mr. Benjamin Wigger

### Congregational Activities

As you might expect, the congregation of the Immanuel PRC of Lacombe, AB, Canada was very busy during the month of June getting their parsonage ready for its latest occupants, Rev. and Mrs. M. Dick. Much of the parsonage received new carpeting as well as a fresh coat of paint. And the entire inside was given a good cleaning.

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

Our readers might also be interested to know that Rev. T. Miersma, pastor of the First PRC of Edmonton, AB, Canada, officiated at the ordination service for Rev. Dick on the evening of July 3. Quite appropriately, Rev. Miersma preached on the theme, "The Calling to Faithful Labor in the Ministry," based on I Timothy 4:11-16. After the ordination service, the entire congregation was encouraged to meet in the fellowship hall for refreshments and an opportunity to meet Rev. and Mrs. Dick. And on Sunday, July 5, Rev. Dick preached his inaugural sermon as both a newly-ordained and a newly-installed minister of the Word. The theme Rev.

Dick chose for his first sermon was "Devoted to the Ministry of the Word," based on Acts 6:4.

We certainly want to extend our congratulations to Rev. Dick, that God has brought him to this calling in our churches. We should also be reminded that Rev. Dick, as well as all our pastors, need our prayers and encouragement so that through them the Word of God may increase and the number of disciples be multiplied (Acts 6:7).

While we are considering first sermons, let us also add here that Rev. Kortering, while not a newly-ordained pastor, did preach a first sermon as the newly-installed associ-



ate pastor of the Hope PRC in Walker, MI. After being installed, and before being loaned to the Evangelical Reformed Churches of Singapore, Rev. Kortering preached his inaugural sermon on Sunday evening, June 28. Rev. Kortering chose for his source of Scripture I Corinthians 9:16-19, and entitled his sermon, "The Necessity to Preach the Gospel."

The following night, the congregation of Hope was invited to a combined welcome for Rev. Kortering as their associate pastor, and a farewell to him and his wife as they planned to leave for Singapore the first week in July.

Beginning this fall the students in grades 1-3 in the Randolph Christian School will begin using the Bible curriculum material written by Mrs. Gertrude Hoeksema, wife of the late editor-in-chief of the *Standard Bearer*, Prof. H.C. Hoeksema. This material was made available by a collection taken this past June at the Randolph, WI PRC.

A "Conference on the Covenant of God" was held in Spokane, WA on July 17 and 18. This conference was sponsored jointly by the Evangelism Committee of our South Holland, IL PRC and the Sovereign Grace Church of Spokane, WA. For some time our churches have been in contact with

this church and its pastor, Rev. Robert Hargrove. Featured speakers at this conference were Prof. H. Hanks and Rev. C. Terpstra.

Rev. Dykstra gave a presentation of his work in Ghana, Africa on August 3 at Hope PRC in Walker, MI.

### Young People's Activities

This year's Young People's Convention, sponsored by the young people of the Faith PRC in Jenison, MI, was held July 27 through 31 at both the Grand Rapids Baptist College and the Reformed Bible College. This year's convention developed the theme, "What is a Christian?" and 262 young people were expected to attend. This theme was also the basis of the Pre-Convention Hymn-Sing the night before, held at the Sunshine Ministries. This sanctuary holds 2,300 persons, and the crowd that night was estimated to be around 1,700.

Mr. Jerry Kuiper was the song leader at that hymn-sing, and he was accompanied by his wife, Bonnie, on the organ and his daughter, Karen Daling, on the piano. Miss Sarah Ondersma and Mr. Jerry VanderKolk helped out on several numbers with trumpet accompaniment. Besides some enthusiastic singing, a couple of special numbers were featured. The Hope Heralds sang two numbers:

"Thoughts on God's Loving Kindness" and "All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name"; and Mr. Marty VanderWal played a piano solo entitled, "Praise to the Lord, the King of Creation."

If the convention was as enjoyable as this Singspiration, then the young people had a good week.

### Ministerial Calls

A call has been extended to Rev. C. Haak, presently serving as pastor of the Lynden, WA PRC, to serve as missionary pastor to the group in Northern Ireland.

Rev. R. VanOverloop declined the call he had been considering to serve as pastor of the Grandville, MI PRC. Consequently, the Council of Grandville presented a new trio to their congregation from which to call. This trio consisted of Pastors W. Bruinsma, B. Gritters, and C. Terpstra. And on August 9 they extended a call to Rev. Terpstra.

### Food for Thought

"Shew me a man's books and shew me a man's companions, and I will tell you what sort of a man he is."

*William Tiptaft*  
(1803-1864)



### CHANGES OF ADDRESS

Rev. and Mrs. Bernard  
Woudenberg  
1355 Bretton Dr.  
Kalamazoo, MI 49006

Rev. and Mrs. Jason Kortering  
9C Happy Mansion  
Happy Ave., North  
Singapore 1336  
Republic of Singapore  
telephone or FAX:  
011-65-741-3074

### RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Mary Martha Society of the Hope Protestant Reformed Church of Redlands, California would like to express their Christian sympathy to their fellow member, Nancy Hendriks, and her husband Randy, and their children in the death of Randy's mother,

#### MRS. MARIE HENDRIKS.

May they find comfort in the words of Revelation 21:4, "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."

Pastor A. denHartog, President  
Mrs. Laurie Jabaay, Secretary

### RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Christian Fellowship Society of Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church expresses its Christian sympathy to our Bible leader, Mr. Pete Miedema, and his family in the death of his mother,

#### MRS. ANN MIEDEMA.

May they find comfort in the words of Psalm 116:15, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints."

Tom Schipper, Vice President  
Judy Wigger, Secretary



### WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On September 9, 1992 our parents,

**REV. and MRS. HERMAN  
VELDMAN,**

will celebrate 60 years of marriage. We are grateful to God for the example of their godly lives and their continuing advice and counsel.

This occasion also marks the 60th year in the ministry for Rev. Veldman. Our family is grateful to the congregation of the South-west Protestant Reformed Church for recognizing this milestone at a special program in October, 1991 at the beginning of his 60th year of service to the churches and of their 60 years of marriage.

Their testimony to us and to all who know them has always been that God has been good to them. Their confession and their hope has always been that of Lord's Day 1:

"That I with body and soul, both in life and death, am not my own, but belong unto my faithful Savior, Jesus Christ ... that all things must be subservient to my salvation, and therefore, by His Holy Spirit, he also assures me of eternal life, and makes me sincerely willing and ready, henceforth, to live unto him."

May God continue to bless them richly in the days ahead.

- Cornie and Evelyn DenOuden  
3 children, 7 grandchildren
- Jack and Elaine VanDyke  
4 children, 8 grandchildren
- Jon and Joanne Huiskens  
4 children, 1 grandchild

Jenison, Michigan

### WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On September 8, 1992, the Lord willing, our parents,

**CLARENCE and JANICE  
KUIPER,**

will celebrate their 25th wedding anniversary. We thank God for giving us these covenant parents who have raised us in the fear of His name. We pray that God may continue to bless them, "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in [them] will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:6).

- Nick and Deb Kleyn  
Lynette, Peter
- Doug, Brian, Marc, Cara,  
Kevin, Rachel, and Randy Kuiper

Walker, Michigan

### NOTICE!!

Classis East will meet in regular session on Wednesday, September 9, 1992 at the Byron Center Protestant Reformed Church, at 9 A.M.

Jon J. Huiskens,  
Stated Clerk

### NOTICE!!

Classis West of the Protestant Reformed Churches will meet in Loveland, Colorado, on Wednesday, September 2, 1992, at 8:30 AM, the Lord willing.

Rev. R. Hanks,  
Stated Clerk

### REMINDER!

Corrected pages are available for the green, ring-bound "Church Order of the Protestant Reformed Churches," to update the book with amendments made after the original printing.

A set of these selected, replacement pages can be obtained without charge, on request to the Stated Clerk:

Rev. Meindert Joostens  
2016 Tekonsha Rd. S.E.  
Grand Rapids, MI 49506  
(616) 247-0638

or

call the seminary (616) 531-1490.

### LECTURE

*Sex and Dating in the  
Christian Life*

Speaker:

Rev. Ronald VanOverloop  
pastor of Bethel  
Protestant Reformed Church

at

Calvin College  
Fine Arts Center  
3201 Burton SE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49546

Thursday

September 17, 1992  
8 p.m.

Question and answer session  
to follow speech

Tapes are available from  
Southeast Protestant Reformed  
Church  
1543 Cambridge SE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49506