

# *THE* **STANDARD BEARER**

**A Reformed  
Semi-Monthly  
Magazine**

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It is likely no exaggeration  
to say that  
*The Psalter, 1912*  
has been used longer  
and more widely  
than any other book like it  
in American  
church history.

See "The Songs of Zion" — page 402

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Vol. 69, No. 17  
June, 1993

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## Editorially speaking ...

The songbook used by the Protestant Reformed Churches in their public worship is *The Psalter*. All of us know that this book is a metrical version of the Psalms, representing the commitment of the PRC to sing only the Psalms in public worship.

But do we know anything of the history of this book of praise? Do we appreciate the worth of *The Psalter*?

We are giving our PR readers an opportunity to discover how much they know about the songbook that they use every Lord's day at church, in their devotions at Bible-study and other gatherings with the saints, and in their family worship. In this issue there is an informative and interesting article on *The Psalter* by Rev. R.B. Lanning, "The Songs of Zion."

Before you read the article, take the following quiz, prepared by a teacher at our Adams St. Christian School in Grand Rapids for the students at this school. The quiz is based on Rev. Lanning's article.

### Quiz on *The Psalter*

- Work on writing *The Psalter* began in this year:
  - 1847
  - 1829
  - 1895
  - 1924
- The Psalter* was finished in this year:
  - 1847
  - 1892
  - 1912
  - 1936
- The Psalter* was written in this city:
  - Boston
  - Pittsburgh
  - New York
  - Grand Rapids
- This church group took the lead in producing *The Psalter*:
  - United Presbyterian
  - Christian Reformed
  - Northern Baptist
  - Protestant Reformed
- How many denominations cooperated in the committee that composed *The Psalter*?
  - 2
  - 9
  - 16
  - 23
- In the original *Psalter*, there were these many numbered selections:
  - 450
  - 434
  - 418
  - 413
- In the original *Psalter*, there were these many different tunes:
  - 436
  - 400
  - 397
  - 254
- What was the major complaint against *The Psalter* which led to the writing of a *Psalter Hymnal* by the Christian Reformed Church?
  - "too hard to sing"
  - "want to be different"
  - "too dry"
  - "don't like the words"
- What was added to *The Psalter* about 30 years after it was written?
  - doctrinal standards
  - church order
  - liturgy
  - chorale section
- About how many congregations use *The Psalter* in some form yet today in North America?
  - scores
  - hundreds
  - thousands

Five correct answers is passing.  
Seven or more correct answers shows remarkable knowledge.

Whether you take the quiz or not, whether you pass or fail the quiz, be sure to read the article on *The Psalter*.

— DJE

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## EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

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## EDITORIAL OFFICE

The Standard Bearer  
4949 Ivanrest  
Grandville, MI 49418  
BUSINESS OFFICE  
The Standard Bearer  
Don Doezeema  
P.O. Box 603  
Grandville, MI  
49418-0603  
PH: (616) 538-1778  
(616) 531-1490  
FAX: (616) 531-3033

## CHURCH NEWS EDITOR

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

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# The Foretaste of Eternal Joy

*Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice.*

Philippians 4:4

Rejoice!

God's people are a happy, a blessed people.

Have you noticed how often Scripture speaks of the joy, the happiness, and the blessedness of the people of God? Have you taken note of the many times we are encouraged, urged, and even admonished to rejoice? Or have you considered how often the church of Jesus Christ has spontaneously broken forth into singing?

Think of Psalm 95:1, "O come, let us sing unto the Lord: let us make a joyful noise unto the rock of our salvation."

Or again, "Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands. Serve the Lord with gladness, come into his presence with singing" (Psalm 100:1, 2).

We have good reason to rejoice, for "Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness" (Psalm 48:1). He is the living God, who lives His own blessed life in intimate covenant fellowship as three Persons in one divine essence. He delights eternally in all His virtues and all His mighty works. He is the Light, in whom is no darkness whatever. In

His light we see the light (Psalm 36:9). "For this God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death" (Psalm 48:14).

We have reason to rejoice in all the works of God's hands, for "the heavens declare the glory of God: and the firmament sheweth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge" (Psalm 19:1, 2).

We rejoice in our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the prophet of old declared, "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy king cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation, lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon the colt the foal of an ass" (Zech. 9:9).

His birth was announced by the angel who said to the shepherds, "Fear not, for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people" (Luke 2:10). He now has a name above all names. Every knee must bow and every tongue must confess that He is Lord, to the glory of the Father (Phil. 2:9-11).

We rejoice as church of Jesus Christ in the midst of this present world. "Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God" (Psalm 87:3). "How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee" (Psalm 84:1, 4).

God's people are very special in the eyes of God. "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9).

Our God supplies all our daily

needs, far more than we can ask or think. He watches over us, cares for us, and even uses us for the ingathering of His church and the coming of His kingdom. He entrusts to us His holy, infallibly inspired Word, His own Self-revelation, wherein He reveals to us the secrets of His heart, His eternal thoughts, plans, and promises, for the purpose of uniting us with Himself in heavenly perfection and fellowship. By faith we embrace Him as the God of our salvation in Jesus Christ, in whom is all the fullness of blessedness.

And, as if this were a small thing, He has planned, has merited, and now is preparing for us a Home with Him in glory, where we shall eternally sing the song of Moses and the Lamb.

\* \* \* \* \*

Rejoice always!

This joy is unique, for it is not a momentary experience, soon to be lost in the routine or turmoil of our daily existence.

Earthly joys at best are only for the moment. We often plan for them some time in advance, only to discover that the anticipation was better than the reality. For these joys belong to the passing things of this world.

Still worse, hidden sorrows, griefs, and disappointments interfere with a full enjoyment of the happy occasion. Natural man never experiences true, pure joy.

The joy of which Scripture speaks is unhampered, complete, all comprehensive, eternal. Even the sorrows of this present time cannot frustrate it. It is true that many are the afflictions of the righteous; yet the apostle Peter speaks of smiling

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



through our tears. Referring to the inheritance that awaits us in the heavens he says, "Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations" (1 Peter 1:6).

James in his epistle tells us, "My brethren, count it all joy, when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing that the trying of your faith worketh patience" (James 1:2, 3).

Jesus adds to that, "Blessed are ye, when men revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you" (Matt. 5:11, 12).

That makes it possible for the believers to sing psalms in the night. We are reminded of Paul and Silas sitting with feet and arms cramped in stocks, the bloody, raw wounds of their backs pressed against the cold stone wall, singing psalms of praise to God in the long hours of the night.

We as children of God are able, and therefore are encouraged, to rejoice always!

\* \* \* \* \*

Rejoice in the Lord!

There is no true joy apart from Him.

Joy! Who does not seek it? We are told to have a good day, or a good weekend. We are surrounded with a superficial mirth that cannot satisfy.

Many seek their happiness in entertainments, sports, or hard-rock music. Many others only add to their misery by trying to drown their cares in wild orgies, immoral living, drunken debauchery, or drugs. A world that is at enmity with God knows no peace, no contentment, and certainly no true happiness.

True happiness is only from and only in the Lord.

Our God lives a life of perfect joy. He rejoices in His glorious divine perfection, and He delights in the intimate blessedness of covenant fellowship as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Christ, the great Servant of Jehovah, experienced throughout His

earthly ministry the joy of doing His Father's will. As the Man of Sorrows He was burdened with the guilt of our sin that brought Him to the cross, yet He always had the assurance that He was well pleasing to God.

Is it not remarkable that even in the hour of utter darkness on Golgotha, when all the billows of divine wrath continued to sweep over Him, causing Him to suffer indescribable anguish of hellish torments, Psalm 22 still rang in His soul, causing Him to reach out to God with the bitter cry, "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

This Christ is now the Lord of glory who blesses us with every spiritual blessing for time and eternity. He has united us with Him by the bond of faith, so that we can confess, "I belong to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ." We can say triumphantly with the apostle Paul, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. 2:20).

"The Lord my Shepherd holds me within His tender care, and with His flock He folds me, no want shall find me there. In pastures green He leads me, with plenty I am blest; by quiet streams He leads me and makes me safely rest" (*Psalter* No. 55).

Christ creates in us a spiritual joy that the world cannot know, for this joy belongs to the things that the eye cannot see, the ear cannot hear, and never entered into the heart of man.

It is the beginning, the foretaste of our eternal joy. For Christ is Lord indeed! He is the source of our lives, the power that sustains our lives, the purpose and goal of our lives. "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Phil. 1:21).

We rejoice in the Lord with a joy unspeakable and full of glory (1 Peter 1:8).

\* \* \* \* \*

Rejoice! Again I say: Rejoice!

This is not merely Paul who speaks. God Himself is addressing His people in His infallible Word.

God says this to you! Do you listen and hear Him speak? He is very insistent that His people rejoice, for a dissatisfied and grumbling spirit is

displeasing to the Lord. Nor are we to take all His bounties and blessings for granted, as if they were coming to us with much more.

Besides that, only a joyful heart is truly thankful and joins the assembly of the saints in a wholehearted song of praise. So often we offend God when we thank him with a cold, formal thanks, or sing with the lips, while our hearts are not in it.

Let us sing a new song to Jehovah for the wonders He has wrought! Give Him the thanks and praise due to Him!

\* \* \* \* \*

Rejoice always!

The guilt of sin may make all prayer impossible and may close the heavens to you. But he who confesses and forsakes his sin finds mercy. How blest is he whose trespass hath freely been forgiven, whose sin is wholly covered before the sight of heaven.

Daily burdens may weigh so heavily upon you that you cannot go on. The way is too steep, too dark, to threatening to carry on. Depression may have its grip on you. The night may be so dark that there seems to be no dawn; it may seem virtually impossible to face the day.

Or you may be suffering from constant and severe pain. You are never without it. Sorrow, disappointment, or even the loss of a dear one may flood your soul with grief.

You may experience signs of approaching death, telling you to set your house in order for the end of the way is near. The last dark stretch of the valley of the shadow of death looms up before you.

Are you tempted by the devil, the world, or your own sinful flesh to a point almost beyond endurance?

Whatever the situation may be, and that without exception, our Lord says: Rejoice!

You ask, "Rejoice because I have such a bitter struggle?" No, not because of your grief, but because you have a deep-seated joy that far exceeds any present suffering and that sustains you even to the end.

Count it all joy, for you know that all things come to us from God's Fa-



therly hand. With Job you can say, "The Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord" (Job 1:21).

God tries you sorely, but He tries in love. He casts you into the refiner's fire to give you endurance for trials still to come (James 1:2-4). He has promised that He will never leave nor forsake you (Heb. 13:5). Rejoice ex-

ceedingly, for He is preparing you for your place in glory (I Peter 1:7). His grace is sufficient for you; for His strength is made perfect through weakness (II Cor. 12:9). You have every reason to rejoice through your tears and to be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven (Matt. 5:12; II Cor. 4:17).

Realizing how sorely we need

this assurance our God adds: Again I say: Rejoice!

Sing to the Lord, sing His praise,  
all ye people,  
New be your song as new honors  
ye pay;  
Sing of His majesty, bless Him  
forever,  
Show His salvation from day to  
day! □

## Editorial

# Aloof from the Alliance

The Alliance of Reformed Churches (ARC) is an organization made up of Christian Reformed congregations unhappy with the Christian Reformed Church (CRC) and of independent churches that have seceded from the CRC. It began in 1984 as a "Consistorial Conference" of CR consistories that objected to developments in the CRC and wanted to plot strategy in opposing these developments. In 1990 the group changed its name to "Christian Reformed Alliance" (CRA).

CRA became ARC in 1991. This last change of name was due to the fact that by 1991 a number of member churches had left the CRC and were, therefore, no longer CR. Also, the leaders of the organization increasingly were of a mind to make it a means to unite various Reformed and Presbyterian churches.

The Alliance serves several purposes. First, it works at getting congregations and people to leave the CRC. Second, it intends to provide some direction, help, cooperation, fellowship, and structure to the independent churches that have left the CRC. Although it is not a synod, it tries to act like one. Third, it desires

to bring Reformed and Presbyterian denominations together in a united Reformed church. This ecumenical function of ARC has become prominent. The leaders of the organization have as a main purpose the forming of a new church federation across denominational lines.

The Protestant Reformed Churches (PRC) receive invitation to send official representatives to ARC's annual meeting.

The PRC ought to remain aloof from the Alliance. They ought to remain aloof by synodical decision.

There are church political reasons for staying aloof. The Alliance is not an ecclesiastical organization. It is not a church assembly recognized by the Church Order of Dordt in Article 29. Yet it is doing work that belongs to the church, specifically to the synod as the gathering of the churches of a denomination: the work of supervising missions, discipline, and ministerial candidates and the work of ecumenicity. The PRC must not countenance this.

Through their committee for contact with other churches, the PRC seek to manifest the unity and catholicity of the church on earth through

contact with "other denominations" (cf. "Constitution of the Committee for Contact with Other Churches," V.). The Alliance represents no denomination. It is not a synod or a general assembly. It is not the proper object of PR contact according to the constitution itself of the PR committee for contact.

At least half the churches in the Alliance are congregations that are still member churches of the CRC. By sending representatives through their synodical committee for contact, the PRC are initiating contact that is to manifest the unity and catholicity of the church with individual congregations apart from the denomination to which these congregations belong. This is disorderly.

In seeking the unity of the church, the PRC may have official contact with other denominations and with individual congregations that find themselves outside a denominational bond.

These church political reasons are important. They have to do with the PRC's observing good order and decency in the church of Christ (I Cor. 14:40; Art. 1 of the Church Order of Dordt).



There is an ethical reason why the PRC must stay aloof from the Alliance. The PRC must not involve themselves in any way with the past, present, or future activities of the Alliance in carrying on its struggle with the CRC.

There is an orderly way of dealing with heresy and unholiness in a Reformed denomination of churches. This is the way of sound preaching; faithful discipline; and, as particularly regards the unrighteous decisions of major assemblies, protest and appeal according to Article 31 of the Church Order of Dordt. There are also methods of dealing with errors that are revolutionary and schismatic. At least one leading church in the Alliance, while still within the CRC, publicly rejected Article 31's way of protest and appeal, publicly renounced synodical authority, and publicly agitated against synodical decisions. At least one leader in the Alliance, while still a member in the CRC, resorted to tactics against fellow officebearers that were utterly reprehensible.

Was not the Alliance itself originally an illegitimate method of resisting the apostasy of the CRC? Is it not presently an illegitimate method for those congregations and officebearers who retain still their membership in the CRC? Where do the Church Order of Dordt and the Reformed confessions authorize the banding together of congregations in an "alliance" in order to fight the denomination to which they belong and in which they persist in remaining? Where does the Reformed doctrine of the church approve the idea and practice of the "*ecclesiola in ecclesia*" ("the little, pure church in the apostate institute") as the right response to the doctrinal and moral decline of one's denomination?

The PRC, like their members personally, are forbidden by the apostle of Christ to make themselves "partaker of other men's sins" (I Tim. 5:22). They must remain aloof from the Alliance.

By involving themselves with the Alliance through official delegation

the PRC leave the impression that they approve the Alliance, what it stands for, what it has done, and what it is doing. One of the leaders of the Alliance drew this conclusion from the presence of official observers from the PRC at the meeting of the Alliance last November. In a speech to the meeting that was reported in *Christian Renewal*, December 21, 1992, this minister said:

We feel we made a clear trumpet sound. We feel because we made that clear trumpet sound we have brothers here today with us from Canadian Reformed, Protestant Reformed and OPC churches saying, brothers, you stand for what we believe and we think we would like to become a part of you . . . (p. 5)

The minister was mistaken. Sending observers did not indicate approval of the Alliance on the part of the PRC, much less a desire to become part of the Alliance. Article 35 of the "Acts of Synod" of the PRC, 1992 clearly shows that the motivation of the synod of South Holland was simply the desire to seek the unity of the church. Besides, synod supposed that the delegation from the PRC would have the opportunity to address the Alliance concerning the issues that divide the CRC and the PRC and that are responsible for the falling away of the CRC from the Reformed faith in large part. The PRC have always been willing to discuss the issues. Nevertheless, the PRC should reckon with the fact that their participation in the Alliance exposes them to the perception that they approve this organization, if it does not make them responsible for the Alliance itself and all its actions.

The PRC ought to remain aloof from the Alliance also for a doctrinal reason. The leaders of the Alliance have ecumenicity as a main purpose of the organization. The Alliance has become a provisional instrument to achieve a united Reformed church. Invitation to the PRC to be represented at the Alliance offers the PRC the opportunity to become part of the

united church envisioned by the leaders.

But the Alliance and its leadership are thoroughly Christian Reformed. Half the churches are members of the CRC; the other half, although recently seceded from the denomination, are, it must be thought, Christian Reformed in theology. Between the PRC and the CRC stand the doctrine of common grace adopted by the CRC in 1924 and the church political actions of the CRC in depositing officebearers for opposing this doctrine. There can and will be no ecumenical relations between the PRC and the CRC, or between the PRC and independent CR congregations, that ignore the doctrine of common grace.

The stand of the Alliance against women in office does not suddenly signal basic agreement between the Alliance churches and the PRC. The controversy of the PRC with the CRC, forced upon the PRC by the CRC, does not have to do with women in office, or with theistic evolution, or even with a human, fallible Bible. The controversy of the PRC with the CRC by the present time extends to all these errors, and more. But the controversy of the PRC with the CRC at its heart concerns sovereign, particular grace and the antithesis.

Where CR churches and officebearers attempt church union while ignoring these doctrines, there the PRC must stand aloof.

If the PRC ought to remain aloof from the Alliance, they ought also to remain aloof from the Alliance's "Confessional Conferences for Reformed Unity." These are conferences created by a self-appointed committee and authorized by the Alliance that are supposed to draw up new confessions on evolutionism, egalitarianism, and ecclesiology.

New confessions on these issues are unnecessary. The "Three Forms of Unity" adequately set forth the truths of creation; God-ordained authority in family, church, labor, and government; and the church. What the cause of the Reformed faith at the end of the 20th century needs are men and churches that will uphold and



defend the confessions.

Also, the entire enterprise is unecclesiastical, "unchurchly." The idea and the topics originated with a self-appointed committee, not with the churches. Realizing this, the committee requested that the project be "anchored" in the Alliance. But the Alliance is as unecclesiastical as the committee. Where is the church in all this? And the work is the drawing up of the church's creeds! Fact is, the churches are deliberately bypassed. For there are Reformed and Presbyterian churches that might have called such conferences.

The agenda is arbitrary. Why not a conference on the antithesis? Why not a conference on the scandal of divorce and remarriage in Reformed churches, an evil that strikes at the very heart of the covenant and covenantal life?

There is something strange about the project. The aim is "Reformed Unity." This is the name of the committee and of the conferences. But those who undertake the project themselves lack this very thing. Some are members of the CRC, while others have seceded from the CRC. No Reformed unity here! The churches

of the Alliance that "anchors" these conferences for Reformed unity are not able to be bound together by the Spirit of Christ in synodical federation, which is the expression of Reformed unity. No Reformed unity here! But these churches and these men are going to accomplish Reformed unity for the rest of us!

May the PRC stand aloof.

In its invitation to the PRC the Alliance asks for counsel.

I offer mine on this vital, precious matter of Reformed unity to the churches that secede from the CRC.

Join a denomination of Reformed churches that shows the marks of the true church as stated in Article 29 of the Belgic Confession. This is your calling as regards seeking Reformed unity according to Article 28 of the Belgic Confession: "All men are in duty bound to join and unite themselves with it (the true church—DJE), maintaining the unity of the Church."

If you cannot do this, because you find serious doctrinal error in every denomination, form the church anew on the basis of the Reformed creeds. But know from the outset that the establishing of a Reformed denomination of churches is not child's play.

It is a difficult, disappointing business. Only those who love the truth see it through. Even then, they are merely the means. Establishing the Reformed church is the work of Christ.

If you must, in obedience to Christ re-form the church. Form it as a truly Reformed denomination of churches that are one in the doctrine of the "Three Forms of Unity" and one in the institution and government of the Church Order of Dordt. It must be synodical according to the Church Order of Dordt. It must not be an association of independent congregations according to the Cambridge Platform.

Then, Christ having blessed your work, seek the existing Reformed and Presbyterian churches in contact and conference in order to discuss and settle issues of difference on the basis of Scripture as set forth in the Reformed confessions. In this way, you may hope that true unity will manifest itself in church union.

You may be sure that the PRC are ready to help in this work and that they will be willing to have contact.

They will not stand aloof. □

— DJE

## Letters

### ■ A Favorite Publication

This letter is long overdue. For quite a while I have been planning to write to express how much I appreciate the articles in the *Standard Bearer*. It has quickly become one of my favorite publications. Whereas I receive certain publications and put them in a pile until I have time to skim through them, I eagerly read the *SB* upon receiving it.

The readers of the *SB* will be interested to find out that our church, Grand Valley Orthodox Christian Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, uses Professor Herman Hoeksema's *Triple Knowledge* as the textbook in one of our catechism classes. We also have been using with great profit Professor Hoeksema's outlines on the

Belgic Confession to aid us in our midweek study of the confession. As well, there are several booklets put out by different Evangelism Committees of the PRC that are in our literature rack in the foyer. The last item of information is the decision of our consistory to take up offerings from time to time for the PR Seminary's building program.

I read with interest the recent "Presbyterian" edition of the *SB* (May 1, 1993). I read the *Harbinger* issue of January, 1993, referred to in the editorial of May 1, and agree with the editor of the *SB* that Dr. Crick confuses the responsibility of man to believe with faith as a condition to salvation that must be fulfilled by man. God-given faith exercised by man as

the *means* of salvation is in no way to be equated with faith as the *condition* for salvation.

As an ex-Presbyterian Church in America pastor, I was reminded by the excellent article, "Concerned Presbyterians," by Pastor E.C. Case, of some of the concerns I had while in the PCA. The Lord used the very issues raised in the article along with other denominational issues to make me willing to leave the PCA for the OCRC.

I, along with many others, am greatly encouraged by the stand the PRC take on the inspiration and infallibility of the Bible, sovereign and particular grace, and the calling of Christians to antithetical living. May our gracious covenant God continue



to use you as a clear, consistent, and strong voice for the Reformed faith. With warmest regards in Christ our Lord.

Bruce C. Davis, Pastor  
Grand Valley Orthodox Christian  
Reformed Church  
Grand Rapids, MI

### ■ Material on Rebaptism

Would you be so kind as to forward a copy of the research carried out by the Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches dealing with the question of rebaptism, to be found in the 1988 "Acts of Synod and Yearbook of the Protestant Reformed Churches in America" as mentioned in the current issue of the *Standard Bearer* (April 1, 1993)?

With thanks to the Editorial Committee for the soundness of that reply to the question raised.

(Rev.) A. Strike  
Gwent, Wales  
United Kingdom

#### Response:

The material you request is on the way.  
— Ed.

### ■ Baptism by Rome

I must say that I strongly disagree with the article on "Rebaptism" (cf. "The Reader Asks" in the April 1, 1993 issue of the *Standard Bearer*). I am a former Roman Catholic, a former Baptist, and now Reformed Episcopalian.

No, I do not measure the worth of the sacrament by the one who ministers it. But when the church (if you can call it this) is not even Christian, then I have to reject it altogether.

Roman Catholicism is not even Christianity! How could anyone who has been born again by the Spirit of God want to hold to a baptism such as baptism by Rome?

And who cares what Calvin said, if Calvin is wrong?

Michael Parenti  
Amityville, NY

#### Response:

Even though your mind is made up, we are sending you a copy of the

study of the issue by the Protestant Reformed Churches.

— Ed.

### ■ Regularly Explaining the Heidelberg Catechism

With all due respect to your better wisdom and experience, it seems to me that you have missed the point of Mr. Flikkema's question in the April 15th issue of our *Standard Bearer*.

The questioner asked, "Is the selecting of a text or passage of Scripture as the basis for the sermon a proper or better method than basing the sermon on the Lord's Day itself?"

Your answer at first seemed to say no, for you write, "... ministers in the Protestant Reformed Churches have no choice..." and that "... they must preach on the Heidelberg Catechism." But then you also write, "It is customary in the Protestant Reformed Churches for the minister to introduce the sermon by quoting one or a few texts/passages of scripture and saying: 'On the basis of this (or these) and many other passages of Scripture is based the instruction of Lord's Day I.'"

Is this "customary" practice not as proper and is it not as good?

To quote Art. 68 of our Church Order does not answer the question. The use or non-use of a biblical text is not the concern of Art. 68. The purpose of Art. 68 is to insure that the Reformed churches faithfully explain the Christian doctrines comprehended in the Heidelberg Catechism, which doctrines are derived from Scripture. For example, ministers must, as Art. 68 states, "... on Sunday explain briefly the sum of Christian doctrine comprehended in the Heidelberg Catechism so that as much as possible the explanation shall be annually completed, according to the catechism itself, for that purpose." However, this can be done with or without using a Bible text or passage. Thus, the question remains, "Is the selecting of a text or passage of Scripture as the basis for the sermon a proper or better method than basing the sermon on the Lord's Day itself?"

The Reformation and our Catechism teach *sola Scriptura*. The Catechism is derived from Scripture, defends Scriptures, and points to Scripture as our only rule in life. Not the other way around. It is my understanding that the men who wrote the Catechism, as Art. 68 states is its purpose, simply wanted to insure that the teachings of Scripture comprehended in the Heidelberg Catechism would not be ignored by ministers who might, due to human weakness, personal preferences or other reasons, leave some of these truths unexplained.

Ken DeJong  
Lansing, IL

#### Response:

The point of Mr. Flikkema's question is, ought the sermon be based on a text of Scripture or ought the sermon be based on the Lord's Day itself? Our answer is this: the sermon must be based on the Lord's Day itself.

This means that the preacher must not simply read the Lord's Day and then proceed to expound a text or passage of Scripture. He must explain the sum of doctrine contained in the Lord's Day itself. Throughout the sermon the preacher must make plain to the congregation how the particular doctrine set forth in the Lord's Day is an accurate summary of what Holy Scripture teaches. But, we emphasize again, the catechism sermon must not be based on a particular text or passage of Scripture; it must be based on the Lord's Day itself. To base the catechism sermon on a text or passage of Scripture is improper. To base the sermon on the Lord's Day itself is not merely the best, it is the only proper method of preaching the *Heidelberg Catechism*. This is the requirement of Article 68 of *The Church Order of the Protestant Reformed Churches*.

That the above is the correct understanding of Article 68 is obvious from the following commentary on this Article:

Sometimes it has been objected that *Catechism* preaching is the setting



aside of the Word of God. It is claimed to be preaching of man's Word. This presentation is utterly false for every Lord's Day division of the *Catechism* is the summary of several Bible passages. Virtually therefore, the Minister who preaches on a certain Lord's Day division of the *Catechism* is preaching on several passages of God's Word. It may be said in this connection that *Catechism* sermons should be so constructed that the congregation sees very clearly that the truths embodied in the *Catechism* are indeed but reproductions of God's own Word. When we preach a *Catechism* sermon, we are preaching the Word of God just as well as if we preach on a certain text or passage taken directly from the Bible. Only, in case of catechism preaching, one expounds and applies the Word of God according to a summary of that Word adopted by all the Churches and agreed to by all the members of our Churches.... Should a text from the Bible be chosen and quoted together with the Lord's Day division of the *Catechism* as text for the sermon? No. This practice may lead some people to think that a catechism sermon is really not a sermon on the Word of God. This erroneous conception should not be encouraged in the least. Furthermore, no Lord's Day division of the *Catechism* is based on a single Bible passage. If a Minister desires to quote the Biblical foundation for any given Lord's Day division, then he shall have to quote a good many passages.... We have heard of some instances in which the Minister would read a text taken directly from the Bible, but he would omit announcing and reading the Lord's Day division. This is of course all wrong. We suppose that this was done to satisfy some who objected to catechism preaching. But we gain nothing in the long run by yielding to mistaken notions. Rather let us labor to remove such mistaken notions. This cannot be done effectively and fairly by preaching camouflaged catechism sermons. In such a case it is better to face the issue squarely than to dilly-dally.... Already in 1902 our synod (Christian Reformed Synod, Ed. Comm.) found it necessary to admonish the Churches as follows: "With a view to dangers from without that threaten sound doctrine, and in consideration of the great need of,

and the very meager interest in the regular development of dogmatical truths, Synod emphasizes the time-honored custom of catechism preaching, and the Classes are urged to give proper attention to this matter, that the regular consideration of the catechism may be observed."<sup>1</sup>

We sincerely hope and pray that a future synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches never finds it necessary to issue such an admonition to our churches!

Prof. H. Hanko, in his explanation of Article 68 of *The Church Order*, writes:

The article requires a brief explanation of the sum of Christian doctrine as comprehended in the *Heidelberg Catechism*.... The purpose of this requirement is chiefly that there may be a regular and systematic exposition of the truths of Scripture. It is easy for a minister to choose only practical texts or to choose texts with certain doctrines while other doctrines are avoided. Preaching from the *Catechism* will ensure the preaching of all the doctrines of Scripture. This is necessary in order that the congregation may grow in the knowledge of the truth of God's Word. Sound doctrine is the heart of the faith by which the believer knows God Whom to know is life eternal. And, indeed, his practical life in the world will only be right and good when it is rooted in the knowledge of the truth. The *Catechism* is admirably suited to accomplish this purpose. It treats doctrine systematically including in it all the fundamentals of the Christian faith. And it treats this doctrine from the experiential viewpoint.

Some have objected that catechism preaching is not Scriptural preaching. But this objection is without basis. Catechism preaching is preaching on the doctrines found in Scripture. These doctrines are based upon

various texts taken together, for Scripture is not a handbook of systematic theology. When the minister preaches from the *Catechism* he must carefully show that these doctrines are the truth of the Word of God.<sup>2</sup>

Rev. Herman Hoeksema (taught Homiletics in our seminary 1924-1964) and his son, Prof. Homer C. Hoeksema (taught Homiletics in our seminary 1965-1981), both felt very strongly about this issue. They wrote:

In view of the fact that increasingly this practice is neglected in many churches, and in view of the fact that many ministers try in various ways to evade this duty, it is not amiss that we stress that the minister must preach on the *Heidelberg Catechism* itself, and must in his preaching expound the *Catechism*. He must not preach on a text from Scripture and merely refer to the *Catechism* in the course of his sermon. He must not merely preach on the truth on which the *Catechism* touches in a particular Lord's Day. But he must preach on the *Catechism* itself. He must read the Lord's Day as he reads his text before the sermon, and then he must proceed to preach a sermon on that Lord's Day. Anything less than this cannot properly be called *Catechism* preaching.... The minister must not forget to leave the impression with the congregation that even in catechism preaching he administers the Word of God. This is not the place to argue the question whether *Heidelberg Catechism* preaching is indeed ministry of the Word. Here we proceed on the assumption that it is undoubtedly ministry of the Word. But we make the point that this ought to be explicit in the preaching. It is a good custom, therefore, that at the beginning of the sermon the minister quotes a few pertinent texts and points the congregation to them as the basis of the instruction contained in the particular Lord's Day on which he is preaching. And while it is not always equally possible to be explicit on this in the course of one's sermon, the minister should certainly let his

1 Idzerd VanDellen and Martin Monsma, *The Church Order Commentary: A Brief Explanation of the Church Order of the Christian Reformed Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1954), pp. 277-280.

2 Herman Hanko, *Notes on the Church Order* (Grandville, MI: Protestant Reformed Seminary, 1973), p. 129.



sermon as much as possible be controlled by the Scriptures. We may remark, too, that frequently it is appropriate as well as enriching to make room in the sermon for a brief explanation of this or that related passage of Scripture.<sup>3</sup>

Again, let it be emphasized, the minister must base his catechism sermons not on texts or passages of Scripture, but on the *Catechism* itself. This is still being taught in our Protestant Reformed Seminary. □

Editorial Committee

3 Herman Hoeksema and Homer C. Hoeksema, *Homiletics* (Grandville, MI: Protestant Reformed Seminary, 1975), pp. 42-43.

## All Around Us

Prof. Robert Decker

### ■ MARCH SUNDAY

Religious legitimacy was an undercurrent of the March on Washington for Lesbian, Gay, and Bi(sexual) Equal Rights and Liberation. More than 300,000 (much less than the 1.1 million many predicted) homosexual rights advocates flooded the nation's capital on the weekend of April 23-25.

About eighty Catholics, Jews, and Protestants, according to news sources, attended a workshop on Friday where they were taught how to use Bible passages to defend the homosexual life-style. The United Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches (UFMCC), a largely homosexual denomination, also distributed a pamphlet called "Homosexuality: Our Story Too." It detailed how to read the Bible through "new eyes" of liberation theology. The tract, written by Los Angeles UFMCC Pastor Nancy Wilson, discusses the stories of Jonathan and David, Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch, Ruth and Naomi, Peter and Cornelius, and Jesus' relationship with Lazarus, Mary, and Martha.

Presumably the homosexuals consider Jesus and these saints to have been homosexuals. This assumption of the homosexuals, if it were not so serious and so terribly blasphemous, would be simply ludicrous.

A ceremony called "the Wedding" took place on Saturday. This consisted of an exchange of commitment, adoration, and fidelity vows.

"We proclaim our rights together as a couple," declared hundreds of gays and lesbians at "the Wedding." The non-sectarian ceremony was intended as both an affirmation of love and a protest against state and local laws which prohibit homosexual marriages. Participants, who paid \$10 for a certificate commemorating the event, were asked to bring tokens of affection for use in the service. Troy Perry, founder and moderator of the UFMCC, performed the ceremony near the Internal Revenue Service headquarters. Heralded were a lesbian couple who have been together for 33 years, and two gay men celebrating 50 years as a couple. Perry said he wanted "to show Middle America and the world that our relationships are as long as those in the heterosexual community, even with all the cultural pressures against us."

March Sunday began with a morning worship and communion service at the Lincoln Memorial, where the UFMCC's Donald Eastman echoed the words of Martin Luther King: "We, too, are a people with a dream." Several thousand participants sang gay and lesbian anthems. The service, which included United Church of Christ (the only mainline denomination to endorse the march) and Universalist ministers, was full of biblical references to justice. A banner read, "If Jesus were here, he'd march too." Several groups within the mainline churches endorsed the march, although their denominations did not.

We predict that it will not be very long before gays and lesbians are granted their "rights" in our country. Neither will it be long before the mainline churches and many other denominations as well will open their

pulpits and pews to gays and lesbians. This will happen in spite of the clear teachings of Holy Scripture concerning this terrible sin, the worst and lowest manifestation of the reprobate mind (cf. Genesis 19; Romans 1:18-32; I Corinthians 6:9-10).

*Christian News  
National & International  
Religion Report*

### ■ SCRIPTURE TWISTING!

That's precisely what it takes to make the Bible condone homosexuality. This was driven home to me when I read Albert Wolters' critique of Dr. Hendrick Hart's proposed exegesis of Romans 1:18-32. Wolters' article, entitled "Hart's Exegetical Proposal on Romans 1," together with a response by Hart entitled "Reply to Wolters," appeared in the April 1993 issue of the *Calvin Theological Journal (CTJ)*, published by the faculty of Calvin Theological Seminary. Wolters is Professor of Religion and Theology at Redeemer College in Ancaster, Ontario, and Hart is Senior Member in Philosophy at the Institute for Christian Studies in Toronto, Ontario. Hart's proposed exegesis appeared in the July - August 1992 issue of *The Other Side*.

According to Wolters, "Hart's basic suggestion is that Romans 1:18-32, with its picture of God's wrath against all manner of human sinfulness, does not represent Paul's own view but rather a traditional Jewish position with which Paul himself disagrees. It is as though this whole passage had been printed between quotation marks, with the heading: 'The Jewish View,' and were followed by a section headed 'Paul's Own

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



View.' The consequence of such an interpretation would be that verses 18-32, specifically the ones dealing with homosexuality, cannot be read as having biblical authority, since the apostle himself disagrees with the sentiments which they express" (CTJ, pp. 166-167).

Hart concludes his reply to Wolters, "I hope that in the discussion of homosexuality we shall not have to learn all over again two things we finally did learn in the debate about the role of women in the church: (1) that this is not simply a matter of those who are and those who are not

faithful to the Bible and (2) that we need to listen respectfully to the sincere testimony of God-fearing homosexuals about their faithful efforts at understanding the Bible obediently in relation to their attempt at leading moral lives" (CTJ, p. 174).

Note well that with Hart it apparently is not a question of what the Bible says in Romans 1:18-32. It's a question of who said it. Is it the Word of God through the inspired apostle Paul or is it a Jewish tradition which Paul quotes and with which he disagrees. Hart proposes that it's the latter. If that be the case, Romans 1

does not in any way condemn homosexuality.

There is not a shred of evidence in Scripture itself that would even suggest that Hart's proposal is correct. Besides, Romans 1 is not the only passage in Scripture that condemns homosexuality.

Dr. Hart occupies a position of influence and leadership as a professor at the Institute for Christian Studies. He is also licensed to exhort (or is it "expound"?) in the churches of Classis Toronto of the Christian Reformed Church.

*Calvin Theological Journal*

*Search the Scriptures*

*Rev. George Lubbers*

# The Proper Spiritual Conduct of Christian Women (3)

## Lesson 7

*Notwithstanding she shall be saved, if they continue in faith, and love and holiness with sobriety.*

I Timothy 2:15

With this article we will finish our exposition of this second chapter of I Timothy.

Paul begins this letter to Timothy, not on a morbid and sour note, but with a refreshing and uplifting spiritual tone. In the very introduction Paul adds, "...by the commandment of God our Savior, and Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope." The hope of God's people is that the great Promise made to Eve in the presence of all

the angels concerning the victory of the only begotten Son will be realized. It will be realized when the Seed of the Woman shall have crushed forever the head of Satan and his angels! In that hope Eve lived and died. Then shall all the elect saints be gathered together in the New Jerusalem.

In verse 15 we read of this "hope" of Eve and of all her godly daughters.

Fallen mankind, particularly fallen women, shall be saved — also the fallen, childless woman who was formed from the rib of Adam. She who fell into the "great transgression" shall be saved in the hope of bringing forth many, many children. These children are all the multitude who are elsewhere called the children of Abraham, and who shall be heirs according to the promise (Gal. 3:24-29). If Eve had not given birth to "sons and daughters," not one re-

deemed saint would have entered into heaven as these who have overcome by the blood of the Lamb (Rev. 12:11).

Truly, Eve's was a very great transgression in the Fall of the entire human race. But she is saved by grace, sovereign grace!

There is a true rock-bottomness to the term "nevertheless she shall be saved." Was it not Jehovah God who uttered the promissory Gospel news in Genesis 3:15? The I am that I am spoke this word. This is the very warp and woof of all the Law and the Prophets (see Heidelberg Catechism, Question 19). Notice carefully the verbs in Question and Answer 19: "From the holy Gospel which God himself

1. first revealed in Paradise;  
2. and afterwards published by the patriarchs and prophets,

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



3. and represented by sacrifices and other ceremonies of the law;

4. and lastly, has fulfilled it by His only begotten Son."

In this beautiful confession we observe a rather long period of time — some 1640 years from Creation to the Flood. It was a world in which the twofold seed became very definitely manifest in the Son of God and the daughters of men. We see here the *Toledoth*, the generations of Adam — from Seth to Noah, from Noah to Abraham, from Abraham to David the king, from David to the Babylonian Captivity, and from the Captivity to Christ. In this line there is the Seed of the woman, and the seed of the serpent. Here we see the tears of believing mothers, do we not? Here we see that Eve is saved in childbearing. This is the manifestation of the twofold Israel. Here we see that salvation is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God who showeth mercy.

\* \* \* \* \*

Paul writes in verse 15 that salvation of Eve is certain both in the old and the new dispensations. It is for those "who continue in faith, love, and holiness."

Yes, Paul adds: "continue ... with sobriety."

The attentive reader will notice that there is not an iota of hope for childbearing women who seek salvation by works of law. Ever the end of the law is, was, and shall be by "faith, love and holiness" (see I Tim. 1:5). He that walks in love for God and his neighbor keeps the law. Only these bear children unto salvation.

This "childbearing" proceeds from a true faith. But it is also a childbearing in a living hope. Paul writes in I Corinthians 13:13, "And now abideth faith, hope, and love; but the greatest of these is love!" Without the love of God shed abroad in our hearts, faith is not living. But where "love" is, there is a keeping of God's commandments which reveals itself in good works. And these "good works" are the "holiness" of a life of constant sanctification — the putting off of the old man and the putting on

of the new man. Here is true joy in God. It is ever more and more to hate and flee from sin.

Eve as well as Adam had true joy in Jehovah-God as the One who revealed the Holy Gospel, as the Gospel of the glory of the blessed God. Whereas the Son of God is the great Seed of the woman, who will bring the perfect sacrifice for all the spiritual sons and daughters of Eve, all of the faith, love, and holiness is centered in "the childbearing" from which this Son would be born from the virgin Mary. Mary, like the converted Eve, never aspired to be ordained a minister, or preacher of the Word in the church. Did not Sarah call Abraham, the father of multitudes, her *Adonai* (I Pet. 3:4-6)?

\* \* \* \* \*

We must consider now the prepositional phrase "with sobriety." It is a very interesting term. When we search both the Old and the New Testament Scriptures we should notice that the terms "sober," "sobriety," etc. do not ever appear in the Old Testament. We will notice presently that the biblical virtue of spiritual "sobriety" comes from the Greek word *sophron* = sound-minded. This may occur in a natural sense. We read in Mark 5:15, "...sitting clothed and in his right mind." In his mind and actions he was no longer a captive of the demons called "Legion." He spoke and acted soberly. He thought and acted soberly. He used sound judgment. When Paul stands in judgment before the noble Festus to defend himself against the slanderous accusations of the Jews, and most ably cites his calling from Christ and his experiences in the Gospel ministry, Festus exclaims with a loud voice: "Thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad." Then Paul answers, "I am not 'mad' most noble Festus, but speak words of truth and soberness." (Compare Romans 12:3; Titus 2:6; I Peter 4:7.) We should notice that in Titus 2:4 this term in the verbal form (*sophonizein*) means to make sober, to bring to their right mind, to love their husbands, to love their children. Therefore Titus must speak the

things to these aged women by speaking "sound doctrine." That is exactly what Timothy must teach the women in Ephesus (I Tim. 2:9-15). They must be soundly and basically taught what law-teaching cannot do. The women must be taught how "to continue in faith, love, holiness with sobriety."

Eve had to learn this spiritual sobriety as she bears and gives training to Cain, Abel, and later to Seth as well as to the many, many children spoken of in Genesis 5:4, 5. It is really without question that both Adam and his wife, Eve, became very old. These post-creation parents must have brought forth many children. And Eve must have had plenty of opportunity to teach these children sobriety in the fear of God: that the daughters love their husbands, love their children, love their parents. Eve learned to love truly and obey her husband in the deep way of sin and grace. I can only think of her as being very, very grateful to Jehovah for His keeping both creation and recreation together. It was not a new relationship, but a renewed relationship. It was the mystery of marriage, of Christ and His church.

What a beautiful practical spiritual teaching. Here is pure doctrine: Theology, Anthropology, Christology, Soteriology, and Eschatology in simplest terms and revealing the length and breadth, the height and depth of the love of Christ, which passes all human knowledge.

\* \* \* \* \*

Some suggestions for more thorough reflection.

1. Is it permissible to teach that the Holy Spirit Himself chose the Greek language, which all the world could speak, to teach the implication of the Old Testament teaching concerning spiritual "discretion"? We know that, particularly in the Proverbs of Solomon, the necessity for the Wisdom of spiritual discretion is taught and reiterated. (See Proverbs 1:2-6. Also read carefully Proverbs 1:20ff.)

2. May we maintain that the Holy Spirit chose the Greek term *sophrosune* to express the practical



idea of the Wisdom concept of the Old Testament? (See II Timothy 4:15-17. See also II Peter 1:19-21.)

3. What was the great role of the aged women in the church? Does the

term "childbearing" mean only "giving birth" or does this include the teaching of her daughters and granddaughters? (See Titus 2:1-9.)

4. Does the teaching in I Timo-

thy 3:1ff. seem to follow logically from the teaching of the first two chapters? Is there something climactic in the verses 14-16? Think it over! □

*In His Fear*

*Rev. Arie denHartog*

## Called To Be a Separate People

God's people are called to be a separate and holy people. It is impossible to be truly holy unless we separate ourselves from the ungodly world. Never has this calling been more urgent than it is today. God's judgment of the world was given already in Genesis 6:5: "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." This is not the judgment of some extremist cult leader but of the living God who has revealed Himself in the Scriptures. His judgment is perfect, holy, just, and true. God's judgment is the reason for our calling to be separate from this world.

For more than six thousand years the world has developed and progressed in wickedness. It is today more openly and blatantly wicked than ever before. Even in the last few years the wickedness of man in the earth has increased to an astounding degree. The law of God is defiantly and flagrantly violated in the world

today. Every principle of morality is cast aside. So-called Christian values and principles in our nominally Christian nation are scorned. Anyone who advocates such principles today will be not only ridiculed but often even violently hated and opposed. There is very little possibility for anyone who holds strongly to any Christian principles in our land to hold any sort of public office. Such a person will be branded an extremist, a radical, and a bigot.

The Bible tells us that, as history progresses, the world will grow worse and worse. It tells us that in the last days "perilous times will come." The world in which we live will not get better. "But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived" (II Tim. 3:13).

There are still many in the modern-day church who insist that there is much in this world that is good and honorable, much that is praiseworthy, much that is worthy of imitation. There are still those who look for a better world here on earth. But how contrary this is to all the teaching of God's Word. There is no such hope for this ungodly world to get better. It is certain that, as the end of time approaches, ungodliness will increase. The god-fearing man who has the discernment of the times and good

knowledge of the Word of God realizes what an evil age we live in and how near we are therefore to the end. It is hard for us to imagine that wickedness can grow any worse than it is in our day and in our land. How long will the Lord yet forbear with the wickedness of man in the earth? When will He come in His holy wrath and perfect justice for the final judgment of the world?

The evil world today has mighty instruments to promote and advance its evil philosophy and life-style. The modern-day mass media is an astounding thing. Recently the *L.A. Times* newspaper had a lengthy article on the influence of television on our modern-day world. The statement was made in that article that no single invention in the history of man has ever made such a dramatic change in the world as has television. Besides television there is the tremendous power of the advertising media, satellite communication, computers, camcorders, videos, fax machines, electronic mail, and who knows what next. All these inventions, wonderful in themselves, are used by the devil and the wicked world to promote its evil philosophy and life-style. It is impossible to escape the influence of all of this. The world is becoming more and more united in evil and in

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*Rev. denHartog is pastor of Hope Protestant Reformed Church in Redlands, California.*



its ungodliness and its opposition to the truth of God.

At the very time when it is so tremendously urgent to stand steadfast on the Word and commandments of God, the modern-day church is more and more compromising with the world. Rather than condemning the world and separating from it, she is instead accommodating and adapting herself to the world. She insists on having a name in the world. She even joins the world in its evil purposes and in its aim to build a humanistic society from which the name of God and the Word of God are more and more excluded.

Strong stands on morality and on truth and righteousness are being abandoned. New morality (or, we should say, immorality) is being proposed. There is less and less of a serious attitude towards sin. Often the philosophy that because everyone is doing it, it cannot be so wrong is adopted. Because immorality is so prevalent we simply have to tolerate it. We certainly must soften the severe condemnation of the Word of God. The Word of God needs to be reinterpreted to suit the age we live in. Much of the Bible, it is said, was written only for the time and culture of the day in which it was written. Instead of following the rule of God's Word, we need "new light and new understanding" from the philosophers, psychologists, and social scientists of the world. Consequently, some of the most grossly wicked lifestyles of immorality (even sodomy) are being tolerated as innocent alternate life-styles even in the church.

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*The antithesis between  
the church and the world,  
between the believer  
and the unbeliever,  
is as absolute as between  
Christ and Belial.*

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Those who condemn such lifestyles are branded as bigots,

homophobic, and unloving. It is blasphemously suggested that if the Lord Jesus were here on earth today, He would allow feminists and sodomites to have a leadership role in the church. This is supposed to be the "love of Christ." The supreme manifestation of love and the highest principle of religion, according to modern-day philosophy, is appreciating everyone for what he is and allowing everyone to do what is right in his own eyes, no matter how wicked he may be according to the Word of God.

Today as never before it is urgent for the church to preach that there is an absolute antithesis between the church and the world. Every truly God-fearing man must understand what this absolute antithesis means for his daily life in the world. We need to read and understand what Paul means when in II Corinthians 6 he warns us, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion has light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?" The antithesis between the church and the world, between the believer and the unbeliever, is as absolute as between Christ and Belial.

In order to understand the urgent need for separation from the world, God's people need to know who they are and who the world is. The antithesis between the world and the true child of God has its beginning in God's election. By nature we are all totally depraved children born from Adam's race. We all stand under the awful judgment and condemnation of the Holy Lord of heaven and earth, the judge of all men. But God in His sovereign grace has chosen His people and separated them from this ungodly world. We did not become God's people because we first separated ourselves from the world. We are by nature hopelessly part of the ungodly world and worthy to be destroyed with it in the last day of judgment. The beginning of separation is

God's sovereign election according to which He has chosen His people to be a "chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people" (I Pet. 2:9).

We will not truly understand our calling to be separate unless we understand that by the wonderful sovereign grace of God alone we have been chosen above all the peoples of the world to be His special people. We must understand this not in wicked pride, imagining that we ourselves are better than the world, for we are not at all. We must understand this in great fear and amazement. Who are we that we should be called the special people of God, that the Sovereign Holy Lord of heaven should have called us to be His own?

Our Lord Himself in sovereign love has separated His people from the world. They are not reckoned among the nations. By the power of His Word He has called them out of darkness into His marvelous light in order that they might show forth His glorious praises. By the sovereign and effectual working of His Holy Spirit the Lord has formed us as a holy nation consecrated unto Himself. He has washed us in the blood of His dear Son, Jesus Christ. He has destroyed in our hearts the enmity that there was against God and has given us a new heart to love Him as the Lord our God. All of this is the theological reason for our separation from the world. We need to understand this theology to understand why we must be separate from the world.

The deepest motive out of which we must be separate from this ungodly world is the love of God in our hearts. There are two very strong passages in Scripture that emphasize this, one in James and the other in the epistle of John. "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity against God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (James 4:4). "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the



lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world" (I John 2:15, 16).

Plainer and more absolute language cannot be found. Love for God requires separation from the world. The man who tolerates the evil of this world and accommodates himself to it; the man who follows the world in its philosophy and life-style—such a man hates God in spite of all that he may claim concerning himself. He may in this world be considered to be ever so nice and friendly and such a good person, he may be ever so popular, but he is a hater of God.

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*To live antithetically  
we need to know  
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in every sphere of life  
in the light of that Word.*

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To love God the Christian must condemn the world and separate himself from it. According to modern philosophy the idea of condemning anything or anyone is considered to be a great evil. We must be tolerant and loving of everyone. Everyone has the right to his own opinion and his own life-style as long as he does not hurt his fellow man in any way. The latter sounds oh so noble. But in fact, when we do not condemn the world and warn the world about the judgment of God upon its sin and wickedness, we become partners with the world in its great evil and deserving of the judgment which awaits it. We are also co-responsible for the greatest hurt and evil to our neighbor. Even partners in secret and private sin do each other great hurt and bring upon each other the terrible wrath and judgment of God.

We must condemn the ungodly world, not with a proud, "holier than thou" attitude but through steadfastly standing upon the unchangeable and perfect Word of God. To live anti-

thetically we need to know the Word of God thoroughly and be able to judge the world in every sphere of life in the light of that Word. The church and God's people are called to condemn the world for the glory of God's holy name. A failure to do that will cause the church to bring shame and dishonor to the name of the Lord and will give the world occasion to blaspheme.

True separation from the world can be maintained only if we understand the spiritual nature of that separation. The Lord does not call us to physical isolation from the world. Our Lord prayed in His High Priestly prayer recorded in John 17 concerning those whom the Father had given to Him by sovereign election, "I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from evil" (John 17:15). God Himself has placed us in this world and keeps us in it. We are to live in the world's countries and cities, we are to work in the world's offices and factories, we are to live among the world's people. The recluse who lives alone in a self-made modern-day monastery does not fulfill the calling of the Lord. He does not do that even if he spends all his life in reading the Word of God and in solitary contemplation of its great truth. While living in the world, we need to pray earnestly according to the example of our Lord, that He will keep us from evil.

We may not use the pretense of a calling to be separate from the world to have a callous attitude toward the misery and wretchedness of this world and to live our lives in such a way that we are shielded from any contact with the world. Separation from the world does not mean arrogant pride which causes a man to hold himself aloof from the world. It is evil for us to imagine that because we are so much better than the world we must have as little to do with the world as is absolutely possible. But, while bearing testimony in the world, the child of God must not fellowship with the world in its evil. He must not allow the world to change his convic-

tions or to compromise his life-style.

We are called to live in the midst of the world. The church must preach the gospel of Christ Jesus in this world until the day that the Lord returns. In order to do that faithfully she must go into the "highways and byways of this world." She must have the grace of God to do as Paul did, to become all things to all men. Our Lord humbled Himself to eat with publicans and sinners. Certainly when the Lord did this He did not fellowship with the

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*Compromise of the Word  
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of the Word of God.*

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sinner in his sin. He did not visit evil places or join with the world's wicked entertainment. He did not even give the pretense of doing such a wicked thing. Rather, He stooped to the wretched and miserable estate of the sinner to call the sinner to repentance and salvation. He called sinners to forsake their sin and to be separate from the evil of this world. The church must follow the Lord's perfect example. The church must stand for the cause of the truth of God and His righteousness in the midst of the world, not all by itself on some island. She must shine as a light in the midst of the darkness of this world. She must not compromise God's truth to accommodate herself to the world, for then she denies the gospel and brings shame to the name of the Lord she is called to represent in the world. Compromise of the Word through worldliness puts out the glorious light of the Word of God.

God's people must go out into the world to reveal the love and mercy of Christ and testify of His truth. We as Christians cannot do that by living exclusively in the sphere of the church and having nothing at all to do with the people of this world. In practical ways to our neighbors and to all with whom we come in contact in society, at school, and at our work place we



must confess the name of our Lord and show forth His truth. But never must we have fellowship with the world in its sins. True love and mercy means that we condemn sin and call men to repentance and righteousness. It means that we call God's people to forsake the world and its sinful way and to walk in the way that leads to life eternal.

In every area of our life we must be separate from every evil philosophy of the world and be conformed to the Word of God. In our homes we as Christian families are called to live according to the good and wise order that God has laid down in His Word. In our business we must refuse to

compromise, in a world of corruption and covetousness, because we love God and His truth and righteousness. We must steadfastly refuse to go along with the world's notion that for entertainment anything goes. We must continue to refuse to have any part of the world's music and dance and wicked movies. There is no doubt about it that some of the grossest wickedness of the world is revealed in the world's entertainment. As popular as the world's movie stars may be in the world, and as glamorous as their life-styles may appear to be, they are in all their gross wickedness an abomination to the Lord. Love for God and for the glory of His name

demands that we separate ourselves from them.

The calling to be separate is a very difficult one. When the true church condemns the wicked world and separates herself from it, she will inevitably incur the wrath and hatred of the world. This is very clearly evident in our day. But the comfort of the true church of God as she lives in separation from the world is the knowledge that she has the Lord as her God. The true church of Jesus Christ living spiritually alone in a hostile world has communion and fellowship with God who dwells in her midst. This is the true glory, joy, and hope of the church of Jesus Christ in the world. □

Church and State

Mr. James Lanting

## Current Issues in Church and State Law

### ■ State Aid to Parochial Schools

*If Jimmy had chosen to attend an equally appropriate private school devoted to progressive politics, feminism, militarism, or Afrocentrism, the state would have provided a sign language interpreter. Because the values espoused by his school are religious, however, Jimmy forfeited this valuable benefit. This*

*is in plain violation of the free exercise clause....*

*Brief of Christian Legal Society, **Zobrest v. Catalina Foothills** (1993)*

The perennial conflict over the use of governmental funds in non-public schools was heightened recently when the U.S. Supreme Court heard arguments this spring in the *Zobrest* case. Some court watchers are touting the *Zobrest* appeal as one of the most important church-state cases in recent decades.

James Zobrest, a deaf student in Tucson, was provided a sign language interpreter for a number of years in the local public elementary school setting. Since the school district in

which he lived did not have a public high school, his parents enrolled him in a local Roman Catholic high school. Local school officials then refused to provide him with an interpreter at state expense. They informed the Zobrests that an interpreter would be provided in any public or private high school, but not in the parochial, sectarian school the Zobrests chose.

The Zobrest family promptly filed suit against the public school officials, alleging that this denial of an interpreter mandated under the federal Education for Handicapped Children Act was a violation of First Amendment's free exercise of religion clause.

The federal trial court and appel-

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



late court ruled against the Zobrests, but the U.S. Supreme Court accepted jurisdiction. The Court's acceptance of the appeal led some constitutional scholars to surmise that the Court may overturn or modify the lower court decisions.

Over a dozen religious organizations have filed briefs in support of the Zobrests, arguing that James Zobrest is entitled to a sign language interpreter in the Catholic high school (or any other parochial or private high school) at state expense. But numerous "separationist" organizations filed opposing briefs, contending that taxpayer money for sectarian education erodes the supposed "wall of separation" between church and state. The Americans United for Separation of Church and State, a strident anti-Catholic organization, contends in its recent newsletters that the *Zobrest* case is its "biggest challenge" that may "open the floodgates for vouchers and all manner of parochial schemes."

The constitutional issue is one of balancing the free exercise clause with the establishment clause of the First Amendment. These clauses prohibit the government from either establishing religion or inhibiting its free exercise. The standard for this balance for the last two decades has been the 1971 Supreme Court decision in the *Lemon* case. The so-called three-pronged *Lemon* test holds that for governmental activity to pass constitutional muster it must (1) have a secular legislative purpose; (2) neither advance nor inhibit religion, and (3) not foster excessive governmental entanglement with religion.

The brief filed in support of the *Zobrests* by the Christian Legal Society and other evangelical organizations implores the Court to "modify or redefine" the *Lemon* test, which it argues has produced "wildly inconsistent results."

Whether the high court will use the *Zobrest* case to jettison the *Lemon* test remains to be seen. Such similar speculation was dampened last year when the Court upheld the ban on prayers in public school graduations

in the *Wiesman* case. A decision in *Zobrest* is expected early this fall.

## ■ Abortion Clinic Blockades Are Not a Violation of Federal Laws Prohibiting Discrimination Against Women

*Randall Terry and other radical Christian leaders are beefing up their plans to blockade reproductive health clinics. They're devising new ways to harass and stalk women who seek abortions and doctors who serve them. And no wonder. Last month the Supreme Court handed down a ruling that gives them free rein and threatens to precipitate a new wave of clinic violence.*

Ann Cook, director of Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights.

*Open up the floodgates ... here we come.*

Randall Terry, Operation Rescue

The quotes above are typical but nonetheless grossly misleading reactions to the U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Bray v. Alexandria Women's Clinic* handed down earlier this year. Although the decision was a minor victory for Operation Rescue, in no way did the Supreme Court address the fundamental legal and ethical issues raised by Operation Rescue's activities of trespass and blockading of abortion clinics.

This is because the Alexandria abortion clinic brought suit against Janet Bray and other anti-abortion activists under an obscure federal law that prohibits conspiracies which deprive "any class of persons of the equal protection of laws, or of equal privileges ... under the law." Thus the abortion clinic attempted to obtain an injunction, fine, and costs against Operation Rescue, alleging its activities constituted a conspiracy to deprive the class of women of their "rights."

The trial court found in favor of the clinic, issued the appropriate injunction, and ordered Bray and others to pay thousands of dollars for the clinic's attorney's fees and costs. The

appellate court affirmed and the activists appealed to the Supreme Court.

The Supreme Court overruled the lower courts and held that the demonstrators did not conspire to discriminate against women. Justice Scalia, writing the majority opinion, held that opposition to abortion cannot reasonably be presumed to be invidious discrimination against women as a class. In other words, the clinic did not and could not prove that the anti-abortionists' activities reflected a "sex-based intent" to deprive the rights of women as a class, even though only women engaged in the practice of abortion.

The Court also ruled that the clinic could not assert a violation of the "right" to an abortion, since current law only prohibits governmental interference with that alleged right, not the private activities of pro-life demonstrators. Accordingly, the Court vacated the award for attorney's fees and costs and ruled that the clinic's injunction suit could not be based on federal anti-discrimination laws.

Operation Rescue immediately touted the *Bray* decision as a victory, and abortionist leaders feigned alarm and issued statements alleging a setback in the women's rights movement.

A close reading of the *Bray* decision, however, reveals that both sides have grossly exaggerated the importance of this decision. This is because, although the Court dismissed the injunction based on *sex-based discrimination*, it nevertheless remanded the case to the state court for issuance of an appropriate injunction based on *illegal trespass* upon private property. Furthermore, the Court also noted that trespass and intentional obstruction of entrances to private property are offenses that may be prosecuted under state criminal law or result in state civil damages. It is clear, therefore, that Operation Rescue has won only a shallow victory, if any at all. The demonstrators will continue to face civil and criminal suits for violation of state trespass laws, federal anti-discrimination laws notwithstanding. □



# The Songs of Zion

## An Appreciation of *The Psalter* of 1912

The year was 1912, and the place was Pittsburgh. In the heart of the city famous for steel and beer, a small group of Psalm-singing United Presbyterians held a last committee meeting. They sat to put the final touches on the labor of nearly twenty years, as they wrote a preface to a new metrical version of the Psalms with music. It was published that year, and has come to be known as *The Psalter*, 1912, or simply, *The Psalter*. This book of praise has been in use ever since in North America, and its influence has spread to many denominations and many other books of Psalms and hymns. It is likely no exaggeration to say that *The Psalter*, 1912 has been used longer and more widely than any other book like it in American church history.

The United Presbyterian Church in North America launched the initiative for *The Psalter* as early as 1893. By 1895 a Joint Committee drawn from nine denominations was in place and began its work. A first draft of the new metrical translation of the Psalms was presented to the churches in 1905, and the final revision of the text was approved in 1909. Once more the United Presbyterians put their hand to the work, and it was their Editorial Committee that carried out the final revision of the text, made selection of the tunes, and then saw the work through the press. The goal throughout these lengthy proceedings was always clear:

There had been a long-felt desire for a version of the Psalms which would satisfy modern literary standards and be recognized as the mutual property of the Churches.<sup>1</sup>

The concern for literary standards reflects the great flowering of English letters in the 19th century, in particular a golden age for poetry. Something of the same concern prompted the efforts to produce a revision of the King James Version of the Bible. This revision first appeared in England in 1881, and its American counterpart, the American Standard Version, was published in the U.S. in 1901. The similarities between the ASV and the texts of *The Psalter* (such as the widespread use of that ancient and poetical form of the Tetragrammaton, "Jehovah") are by no means coincidental. The General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church had duly authorized and recommended the ASV to the churches in 1907.<sup>2</sup>

The ecumenical concern behind *The Psalter* was translated into an interdenominational effort on a scale that has seldom been equaled or surpassed:

The prime distinction of this Psalter is its use of the metrical version of the Psalms approved September 22nd,

1909, by a Joint Committee from nine Churches of the Presbyterian family in Canada and the United States.<sup>3</sup>

Among the nine participating denominations was the Christian Reformed Church, spreading its wings in a rare flight of inter-church activity.

Here was the last stand for singing the Psalms in worship among Presbyterians on this continent. Hymns were already in use among three of the nine bodies, but the remaining six groups were still committed to "exclusive Psalmody." The view of Psalm-singing taken by the Editorial Committee could not be clearer:

With this brief preface the book is sent forth on its sacred mission. It presents anew the immortal songs of the Holy Spirit, those matchless hymns of the Bible which have been sung in far-off countries and centuries, which were chanted by our Lord and His disciples, and which with their measured language of religious feeling and devotion will abide until the end.<sup>4</sup>

The 150 Psalms were distributed in *The Psalter* as 413 numbered selections. This practice had been adopted as early as 1887 in the last *Psalter* which the UPCNA had produced on its own. The division accomplished at least three purposes. First, the Psalms most frequently used appear in several versions, for variety's sake. Second, the longer Psalms appear with

Rev. Lanning is minister of the Christian Reformed Church in the village of Lamont, near Coopersville, Michigan.

1 "Preface," *The Psalter with Responsive Readings*, United Presbyterian Board of Publication, Pittsburgh, 1912, p. 3.

2 "Preface," *The Psalter Hymnal*, United Presbyterian Board of Publication and Bible School Work, Pittsburgh, 1926, p. 415.

3 "Preface," *The Psalter with Responsive Readings*, p. 3.

4 *Ibid.*, p. 5.



a variety of possible tunes, and where the mood of the text changes, the tune changes as well; see the treatment of Psalm 27 (Nos. 71-73). Third, sub-units of the texts could be isolated as selections by themselves, and selected stanzas regrouped into an additional selection, such as "On the Good and Faithful," No. 7. Musically the committee spared no effort:

Each tune is set but once. This rule secures a wealth of music, so that this Psalter contains no less than four hundred and thirty-six tunes, inclusive of twenty-three alternates.<sup>5</sup>

Despite these selling points, American Presbyterians by and large turned away from Psalm-singing after 1912. In 1926 the United Presbyterians published *The Psalter Hymnal*, and in 1950, the UPs collaborated with the Reformed Church in America on *Songs for Christian Worship*. In 1955, five denominations, including four of those that produced *The Psalter, 1912*, published *The Hymnbook* for the use of their collective membership of 3.5 million people.<sup>6</sup> The Psalms must jostle for a place among the hymns these days in a very unequal contest in most Presbyterian and Reformed churches. We shall not mention the rise of "Praise and Worship" choruses, and the addition of the overhead projector to the sacramental furniture of the sanctuary.

On the surface it would appear that the publication of *The Psalter* was the last grand campaign in a war for Psalmody that was very decisively lost thereafter. Yet in various ways the high hopes of the Editorial Committee have been vindicated. Texts from *The Psalter, 1912* live on in many books of more recent vintage, including *The Hymnbook* of 1955, still widely used, and in some respects the most

diverse and representative book produced by Presbyterian and Reformed people in the U.S. *The Psalter* was extensively used in production of both editions of the Orthodox Presbyterian *Trinity Hymnal* (1961, 1990), and some of its texts even appear in *Hymns for the Family of God*, published by Bill and Gloria Gaither in 1976.

More significantly, *The Psalter* found a place for itself in Dutch Reformed circles in the U.S. and Canada. In 1914 the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church adopted *The Psalter* for use in its growing number of "American-speaking" churches, where it is still remembered by old-timers as "the green book." (CRC books of praise have been color-coded for quick reference as "the green book" of 1914, "the red" of 1934, "the blue" of 1959/76, and "the grey" of 1987.) It was not very long before unhappiness was expressed over the "dry" ("too dry to be used with satisfaction") character of the typically British/American texts with their concise and literal four-strophe stanzas. The contrast was with the Dutch version of the Genevan Psalter, with its expansive texts and luxuriant tunes. By this period (1930) hymns were being introduced into the CRC, and so work was begun on a *Psalter Hymnal* patterned after the United Presbyterian book of 1926. The new book would include a large selection of favorite Dutch *psalmen* translated into English and set to their familiar Genevan tunes.

This was not the end of *The Psalter, 1912* in the CRC, however. *The Psalter Hymnal* of 1934 reproduced a substantial amount of the earlier book, and almost as much survived a further revision published as the "Centennial Edition" of *The Psalter Hymnal* in 1959. Small remains of *The Psalter, 1912* live on even in the latest "revision" of *The Psalter Hymnal*, "the grey book" of 1987. Where Psalm-singing survives

in the Christian Reformed Church today, the dying fires are fed with leaves from *The Psalter, 1912*.

And the story continues. When they left the CRC in the 1920s, the founders of the Protestant Reformed Churches took *The Psalter* with them. With commendable persistence rare in American annals, they have continued to use the same book down to the present time. The Free Reformed Churches in North America have also used *The Psalter* since their beginnings in the 1940s. The first copy of *The Psalter* owned by the present writer was a gift from two Protestant Reformed friends, Pete and Fanny Lubbers; and the first time this writer used *The Psalter* in worship was in the Free Reformed Church of St. Thomas, Ontario. The Netherlands Reformed Congregations have used *The Psalter*, presumably since they first began to use the English language in their services. It was in an NRC that the writer's wife learned to sing her "psalters" as a little child. (In these churches the numbered selections of *The Psalter* are referred to as "psalters" both individually and collectively. Thus a noted NRC writer mentions "our psalter-singing custom" and church members speak warmly of the blessing of "singing the psalters.")

These groups all use *The Psalter, 1912*, in the edition published by Wm. B. Eerdmans Co. in Grand Rapids since 1927. Both the 1914 and 1927 editions included the Doctrinal Standards and Liturgy current in the CRC at that time. The 1927 edition also included the 1914 Church Order of the CRC. Sometime after 1934 (was it in 1947?) a Chorale Section was added to make available the English versions of the Genevan psalms prepared for the 1934 *Psalter Hymnal*.

In recent years, special editions have been published by the Protestant Reformed Churches (1988) and the Netherlands Reformed Congregations (1991). Musically little has changed; the NRC edition adds 18 selections to the Chorale Section. Both editions have re-set the doctrinal and liturgical sections, and the result has

5 *Ibid.*, p. 4.

6 "Preface," *The Hymnbook*, ed. David Hugh Jones, pub. John Ribble, (PCUS, PCUSA, UPCNA, RCA), Philadelphia, 1955, p. 5.

7 *Acts der Synode van de Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerk 1930*, p. 59.



been a vast improvement in appearance and legibility. The PR edition added introductions to each of the doctrinal statements, and along with the printing of the three ancient or ecumenical creeds (The Apostles', the Nicene, and the Athanasian) the Creed of Chalcedon appears, though it has no official standing among the Reformed churches in general. No changes were made in the Liturgy. The Protestant Reformed Church Order is substituted for the 1914 CRC document.

The Netherlands Reformed edition of 1991 provides introductions for all the confessional documents, and these are on average twice as long as those in the PR edition. A new and much longer Preface stands at the head of the volume. Additions to the Liturgy include a new form for Public Confession of Faith (p. 130) and a form for Public Confession of Guilt. The Form for Excommunication is enlarged with the text for three preliminary announcements to the congregation. Forms for the consolation of the sick and the *Collection of Christian Prayers* are also included, the former a new translation from the Dutch, and the latter a Christian Reformed translation from the same source, first published in 1934. The Dordt Church Order appears in its 1619 form, right down to the signatures of the *moderamen*. Of special interest are the "suggested orders" for Morning and Evening Worship. With these various additions, the NRC edition of *The Psalter* provides the English reader with the fullest and most authentic form of the doctrinal standards and liturgy of the Reformed churches as settled and determined by the Synod of Dordt.

The present writer is concerned, however, that with the passage of time, *The Psalter* has, like most of us, begun to put on weight and added bulk. *The Psalter, 1912* was a volume not quite 7/8ths of an inch thick. The present NRC edition nearly doubles this to 1 1/2 inches. At what point does the added size and weight become a problem? Are introductions, proof texts, and creedal documents

with no official standing really needed in a liturgical volume? Are the various Church Order documents really worthy of inclusion at all? *The Psalter* is first of all a working tool and ready reference for public worship. Perhaps what is needed is a separate "study edition" of the doctrinal standards, liturgy, and church order. Such a volume could be expanded even beyond present limits, and would certainly be a welcome addition to the Reformed bookshelf.

What accounts for *The Psalter's* wide acceptance and extraordinary longevity? For one thing, its high achievement as a metrical translation of the Psalms. The influence of the King James and American Standard Versions of the Bible shines through on each page. From the KJV comes a language of devotion that is rich, beautiful, and reverent; from the ASV comes a clear, consistent style, and an interest in fresh and more exact possibilities for translation of the original text.

Students of the Psalms will find many stimulating suggestions for translation and interpretation in *The Psalter*. Discreet but appropriate use of New Testament idiom ("Christ," "Savior," "Church") adapts the Psalms for use in the church under the Gospel yet without going to extremes in the manner of Isaac Watts. For someone not well acquainted with the devotional and liturgical use of the Psalms, the subject headings for each numbered selection provide an instant and often very helpful introduction.

Musically, *The Psalter* has its strengths and weaknesses. There is an amazing wealth of tunes in the book, including many obscure tunes that deserve to be more widely known: e.g., "Rolland," No. 233; "Kinross," No. 315; "Broadman," No. 289. Good use has been made of familiar hymn tunes such as "Surelia," "Love Divine," and "Nicaea." Not so successful use is made of Christmas carol and hymn tunes; an especially bad example is "Herald Angels," No. 3. An occasional folk tune appears, such as the aptly-chosen "Auld Lang Syne,"

No. 212 (Second tune). Though the original edition of *The Psalter* used only a few Genevan tunes, this defect has been remedied with the inclusion of the Chorale Section. This part of the volume needs further improvement; use should be made of the plain chorale settings prepared for the Third Edition of the CRC's 1934 *Psalter Hymnal*.

The most compelling feature of *The Psalter* is its high degree of variety and flexibility. Multiple settings of particular Psalms make their frequent use an opportunity for the fullest exploration of their meaning. There is a wide range of musical styles, and church musicians should be challenged to do full justice to the many possibilities for registration and interpretation of the accompaniment. Metrical indexing opens the way for wiser choice of tune to accompany a particular text. One feature of the musical notation is worth mentioning, namely, the broad lines drawn through the staves of music to indicate how each line should be phrased. Organists, please take note! Too many of you play right through, trailing a breathless and unedified congregation in your wake.

All in all, *The Psalter* is a rich resource for public worship. It offers as much to a church which is just beginning to use the Psalms in worship as it does to churches of well-established Psalm-singers. So it happens that on any Sunday of the year, all across North America, in hundreds of churches, thousands of worshipers will bring their praise and prayers to the Lord using *The Psalter, 1912* in some form, either the whole or some part of it. The Editorial Committee had some intimation of what was to come:

In the thought of many this versification of the Divine hymnal, because of its merit and its undenominational character, is destined to receive broad acceptance and become historic.<sup>8</sup>

8 "Preface," *The Psalter with Responsive Readings*, p. 4.



The history continues, for where *The Psalter* is used today it is firmly entrenched, though it is more than 80 years old. If the Lord tarries, the little children learning to sing their first "psalters" today will be singing them

well past the middle of the next century. No other psalter or hymnal ever produced in the English language has continued so long in use, with the possible exception of the Scottish Psalter. The hand of God was evi-

dently in the work, much to the glory of His Name and the comfort of His Psalm-singing folk, who love to sing these "songs of Zion." □

## Book Reviews

*Mormons Answered Verse by Verse*, by David A. Reed and John R. Farkas; Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1992; 154pp., \$6.95 (paper). [Reviewed by Agatha Lubbers.]

John R. Farkas, former Mormon Elder and Quorum President, and David A. Reed, convert from the Jehovah's Witness cult, have collaborated in producing a brief but accurate review and analysis of the fallacious system of thought held by the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-day Saints, i.e., Mormonism. Conciseness and comprehensiveness are major strengths of the book.

In eight brief chapters the authors answer the Mormons. The introduction succinctly summarizes the main events in the history of Mormonism from 1805 to 1991. Writing about the visits by pairs of young missionaries who arrive by bicycle, Scriptures in hand, at doors across the United States, the authors state, "No, it is not the Book of Mormon that these missionaries open to persuade potential converts, at least not at first; rather it is the Bible that furnishes dozens of citations the missionaries use to 'prove' all other churches false and to reveal their own organization as the restoration of Christ's true church today. It is to refute this misuse of the Bible that *Mormons Answered Verse by Verse* is written" (pp. 12, 13).

Because I teach a course that studies the rise and development of cults in the 19th and 20th centuries I immediately found a use for Chapter 1, the six-page "Capsule History of Mormonism" which lists and dates the significant incidents that comprise Mormon history. The "Capsule His-

tory" covers a period of 187 years. It begins with the birth of Joseph Smith, Jr. in 1805, offers an informative sketch of the development of a false church, organized in 1830 by six members, that today numbers over eight million adherents.

Chapters 2 and 3 review the doctrines and sources of authority held by the Mormons. Those who wish to be conversant and knowledgeable about Mormonism will be well served by these chapters because they contain a review of major terminology and the three additional "scriptures" of the Mormons, (*The Book of Mormon*, *Doctrines and Covenants*, and *The Pearl of Great Price*.)

The title of the book, *Mormons Answered Verse by Verse*, indicates the main purpose of the book. This main purpose is carried out in the chapters comprising the 90 pages of this 154-page book. In three chapters (Chapters 4, 5, and 6) the authors analyze and give verse-by-verse answers to Mormons from texts taken from the Old and New Testament Scriptures that are misused by the Mormons. In Chapter 4 an analysis is given to texts taken from the Old Testament. In Chapter 5 the Mormon misuse of the New Testament is critiqued. In Chapter 6 the authors analyze and critique quotations taken from the *Book of Mormon*.

In their analysis of the Mormon falsification of Exodus 6:3 ("And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name Jehovah was I not known to them") the authors write as follows: "Unlike many pseudo-Christian cults that deny the deity of Christ, the Mormon Church

teaches that Jesus Christ is Jehovah (the LORD) of the Old Testament. Mormons may even properly associate Old Testament verses with New Testament verses to show that Jesus is Jehovah: Deuteronomy 1:32, 33 with I Corinthians 10:1-4; Isaiah 43:3, 11 with Luke 2:11; and Isaiah 48:17 with Romans 3:24. If the discussion goes only this far, a Christian may assume that his Mormon acquaintance agrees with him theologically. But that is not actually the case. While the Christian understands Jehovah to be one of the Hebrew names of the triune deity — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit — the Mormon believes quite differently. The Mormon Bible Dictionary gives the following explanation:

When one speaks of God, it is generally the Father who is referred to; that is Elohim. All mankind are his children. The personage known as Jehovah in Old Testament times, and who is usually identified in the Old Testament as LORD (in capital letters), is the Son, known as Jesus Christ, and who is also a God ... he being the eldest of the spirit children of Elohim.... The Holy Ghost is also a God (cf. pp. 45, 46).

Leaders of cults are theoreticians who behave like their father, Satan. They wrest the Scriptures to their own destruction and attempt to interpret pet sections and passages of Scripture in such a way that these Scriptures will seem to support the theories they have developed and adopted as truth. They sometimes can do this quite easily if the passage of the Word of God seems to fit their own theory or if it seems to be a bit obscure in its meaning.



I Corinthians 15:29 is the New Testament text cited by Mormons in an attempt to prove the veracity of the Mormon theory of baptisms for the dead. "...what will they do who are baptized for the dead, if the dead do not rise at all? Why then are they baptized for the dead?" Reed and Farkas offer an interpretation of I Corinthians 15:29 that refutes the Mormon theory of "proxy baptisms and baptisms for the dead." Reed and Farkas state that if a Mormon is not convinced after seeing the evidence "you may wish to show him an internal contradiction in his own reli-

gion." The authors then cite at least eight places in the *Book of Mormon* that teach that only in this life can one obtain salvation and that proxy baptisms which claim to make it possible for someone to be brought into the Mormon fold after death are impossible. The authors say: "... they are left with the problem of reconciling their church's ordinance of baptism for the dead with their own sacred scriptures that rule out the practice" (p. 87).

Other false teachings of the Mormons are in similar fashion described, analyzed, and critiqued.

The discussion of Acts 3:20, 21 states that "Christians understand these verses as referring to the millennial reign of Christ" (p. 76). The statement implies a premillennial interpretation of the end times. Because the establishing of a permillennial eschatology is not the main purpose of the book, the book can be used profitably by the Reformed student of the cults.

The book is recommended as a significant contribution to the genre of books on the cults and the occult. □

## News From Our Churches

Mr. Benjamin Wigger

### Ministerial Calls

The congregation of Southwest PRC in Grandville, MI has extended a call to Rev. R. Dykstra, presently serving as pastor of Doon, IA PRC.

Rev. John Heys, one of our denomination's ministersemeriti, was admitted to the Holland Hospital in Holland, MI for complications brought on by a severe case of the flu. He had been home for about a week when he was sent back on May 1 with a severe case of ulcers. This would be a good time to remind our readers to consider prayerfully the needs of all our ministers, both those with a congregation and those who are retired. A word of thanks would also be appreciated.

We also extend our congratulations to Rev. and Mrs. Ron Cammenga, of the Loveland, CO PRC, on the occasion of the birth on April 17 of a baby girl, Cherith Sue.

### Congregational Activities

The Peace PRC of Lynwood, IL sponsored a lecture for April 23 in the auditorium of Illiana Christian High School. Prof. H. Hanko, of our semi-

nary, spoke on the subject, "Watching for Christ's Coming."

In today's church world, as never before, questions are being asked concerning one's membership in a church denomination. Are they still relevant or even required today? Or may a church or an individual ever leave a denomination? Or, perhaps even more importantly, how does one go about selecting a denomination to associate with? Good questions these are, questions that need answers. They were addressed, along with many related ones, at a public lecture sponsored by and held at the Grandville, MI PRC on May 4. At that lecture Grandville's pastor, Rev. Audred Spriensma, spoke on the subject, "Who Needs a Church Denomination?"

The Church Extension Committee of Lynden, WA PRC is again sponsoring a Community Bible Class in Reformed Doctrine this spring. This is Lynden's 5th year of holding such meetings. The classes were scheduled to be held on four Tuesdays in May in Lynden's church basement. The topic this year will be, "The End of All Things" — the doctrine of eschatology.

After the second service on Resurrection Sunday, the congregation of Immanuel PRC in Lacombe, AB, Canada was invited to remain at

church to sing in celebration of the resurrection of our Lord. Between the service and the singing a lunch was served in the social hall.

From the archives of Loveland, CO PRC comes an item of interest to our readers. Posted on the wall in the foyer of Loveland is a Western Union telegram that was sent to Mr. Fritz Schwarz, June 6, 1958, from the Synod of the PR Churches informing Loveland that they had been received into the denomination.

The Choir of Grandville, MI PRC presented a Spring Program on the evening of May 2. The music planned for presentation pertained to the theme of our Lord's Passion, Resurrection, and Ascension, and the Christian's response of Praise and Thanksgiving.

The Choir of Hope PRC in Redlands, CA also presented a Spring concert. They chose for their program the cantata, "Rise, Glorious Conqueror."

And the congregation of Hudsonville, MI PRC heard their choir members present a concert on April 25. The choir divided their songs into groups dealing with the triumphant entry, Christ's suffering and death, His resurrection, and our comfort.

### Denominational Activities

This year's combined Mr. and

Mr. Wigger is an elder in the Protestant Reformed Church of Hudsonville, Michigan.



Mrs. Adult Bible Societies Mass Meeting was held on April 20 at Hope PRC in Walker, MI. Rev. B. Gritters addressed the group on the topic, "Christian Education in Crisis."

Also on April 20 the Spring Ladies' League Meeting was held at the Doon, IA PRC. Rev. Dykstra spoke on "Christian Liberty — Its Place in our Churches."

#### Young People's Activities

The Young People's Bible Study

of Trinity PRC in Houston, TX has been following the theme of the upcoming Young People's Convention, "Spiritual Youth in a Carnal World." Study began with "In Entertainment," followed by "At Work" and "In Dating."

Speaking of this year's Y.P. Convention, it might interest our readers to know that the Lynden, WA young people, the host society for next year's convention, are already hard at work

with plans for that convention, with committees meeting regularly. □

#### Food For Thought

*"Your feelings about the Sabbath will always be a test and criterion of your fitness for heaven. Sabbaths are a foretaste and fragment of heaven. The man who finds them a burden and not a privilege may be sure that his heart stands in need of a mighty change."*

— J.C. Ryle

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

#### WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On June 18, 1993, the Lord will-ing, our parents and grandparents, **EDWARD and JENNIE STOUWIE**, will celebrate their 45th wedding anniversary. We give much thanks to our covenant God for giving them these many years together and for their love and covenant instruction to us. "...the father to the children shall make known thy truth" (Isaiah 38:19).

- \* Lenore Dieck  
John and Lynnae, Kathy, Mary
- \* Randy and Janice Bode
- \* Ed and Mary Stouwie  
Kevin, Rachel, Curtis, Susan,  
Rosalyn
- \* Gys and Joanne VanBaren  
Philip, Christy, Michelle, Eric,  
Todd
- \* Craig and Sharon Derks  
Dale, Keith, Jenni, Bryan

Lansing, Illinois

#### RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Choral Society of the Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church expresses its Christian sympathy to Mrs. Helen Cnossen and family, in the death of her mother,

**MRS. CAROLINA tenHAAF.**

May they be comforted by the words of Psalm 116:5, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints."

Gerry Schut, President  
Lois Dykstra, Secretary

#### WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

June 1, 1993, marks the 25th wedding anniversary of our parents, **ART and SARAH DE JONG.**

We are thankful to our gracious God for the 25 blessed years they have shared together.

The Lord has been gracious to us in providing us with God-fearing parents who have provided us with their constant love, care, and guidance through these many years.

It is our prayer that the Lord will continue to bless them in the years ahead. "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:13).

- \* Arthur Lester
- \* Elizabeth Grace
- \* Eileen Rachel
- \* Sarah Lynn
- \* Suzanne Rose
- \* Rebecca Ruth
- \* Rita Renee
- \* Grace Danielle
- \* Martin Seth
- \* Edna Christine

South Holland, Illinois

#### REMINDER!

The *Standard Bearer* is published only once a month during June, July, and August.

#### WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On May 27, 1993, our parents, **MR. and MRS. MAYNARD VEENSTRA**, celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary.

We are thankful to our heavenly Father for giving us God-fearing parents who brought us up in the fear of His holy name. It is our prayer that the Lord will continue to bless them and keep them in His care.

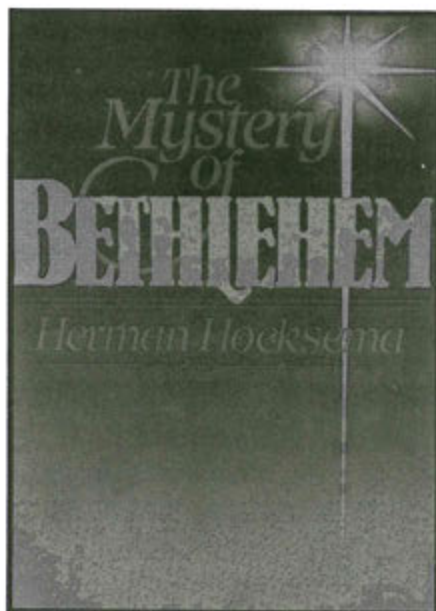
"But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children" (Psalm 103:7).

- \* Jay Veenstra
- \* Ira and Mary Veenstra
- \* Arie and Ann Griffioen
- \* Helen Veenstra
- \* Gerrit and June VanDenTop
- \* Gerald and Clara VanDenTop
- \* Hazel Besselsen
- \* Merle and Kay Veenstra  
30 grandchildren  
61 great grandchildren

Grand Rapids, Michigan



## CLOSEOUT SPECIAL



Order at clearance price Herman Hoeksema's devotional on the mystery, wonder, and excitement of the events at Bethlehem. Filled with twenty skillfully written and thorough chapters. Yours for \$6.50 in the U.S. and \$8.50 outside the U.S. All orders include shipping. To order, send payment to:

RFP  
c/o Daniel Bush  
P.O. Box 2206  
Grand Rapids, MI 49501 USA.

## RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Choral Society of the Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church extends its Christian sympathy to Miss Judy Lanning and family in the death of her mother,

### MRS. ELSIE LANNING.

May the family be comforted in the words of I Corinthians 15:22, "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."

Gerry Schut, President  
Lois Dykstra, Secretary

## BRITISH REFORMED FELLOWSHIP

### FAMILY HOLIDAY CONFERENCE

**Dates:** 30 July — 6 August 1994.  
**Place:** Scottish College of Textiles,  
Galashiels, Scotland.

(34 miles south of Edinburgh; 72 miles from Glasgow).

**Speakers:** Professors H. Hanko and D. Engelsma, PRC.  
Rev. Sinclair Horne, Scottish Reformation Society.

**Theme:** The Doctrine of Sovereign Grace.

**Accommodation:** All rooms single study-bedrooms with washhand basins, and bed linen and towels provided. (One bathroom and two toilets per ten rooms).

**Tours:** Edinburgh; Sites associated with Scottish Covenanters; Bass Rock; Berwick-on-Tweed; Ettrick.

### Cost:

Option (A) Full Board: Adults £155; Children 5-12 £78; children under 5 free.

Option (B) Bed and Breakfast: Adults £94; Children 5-12 £47; children under 5 free.

Option (C) Self catering: Six-bedroom family unit with separate kitchen/lounge £200.  
Note:

With regard to Options (B) and (C) meals can be purchased at the following rates: Lunch £5 (children half-price); packed lunch £3.50; Dinner £7 (children half-price). However, all such meals must be ordered at the time of booking.

Contact persons (for information or reservations):

Mr. Tony Horne  
9 Church Road  
Thornbury, Bristol BS12 1EJ  
England  
(Tel. 0454-414517)

Mr. Bill Oomkes  
6299 Wing Ave. S.E.  
Grand Rapids, MI 49512  
USA  
(Tel. 616-698-6687)

## WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On May 27, 1993, our parents and grandparents,

**MR. and MRS. ALBERT  
KARSEMEYER,**

celebrated their 45th wedding anniversary. We are thankful to our God for the love, guidance, and instruction which they have given us. It is our prayer that He will bless them with many more years together.

"But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children" (Psalm 103:17).

- \* Jerry and Pat Schipper  
Becky, Jason, Jeremy, Emily
- \* Ed and Jeanne Karsemeyer  
Shawn, Renae, Todd, Ryan, Kyle
- \* Greg and Elaine Engelsma  
Chad, Shannon, Valerie
- \* Al and Carol Karsemeyer  
Clint, Ronda, Kirk, Jessica, A.J., Troy

Janison, Michigan

## CALL TO SYNOD!!

Synod 1992 appointed Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church the calling church for the 1993 Synod.

The Consistory hereby notifies our churches that the 1993 Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches in America will convene, the Lord willing, on Tuesday, June 8, 1993 at 9:00 A.M. in the Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church.

The Pre-Synodical Service will be held on Monday evening, June 7, at 7:30 P.M. Rev. G. VanBaren, president of the 1992 Synod, will preach the sermon. Synodical delegates are requested to meet with the Consistory before the service.

Consistory of  
Hudsonville PRC  
Mr. Henry Boer, Clerk.