



# *THE* **STANDARD BEARER**

***A Reformed  
Semi-Monthly  
Magazine***

As true churches (though by no means perfect churches), the Protestant Reformed congregations are called by God to work in 1994. This work is, first, to hold fast what they have. The importance and difficulty of this task for a church should be evident from the widespread abandonment of the fundamentals of the Christian faith by so many churches in our day.

See: "The Church in the New Year" — p. 148

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EDITORIAL OFFICE

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

CHURCH NEWS EDITOR

Mr. Ben Wigger  
6597 40th Ave.  
Hudsonville, MI 49426  
NEW ZEALAND OFFICE  
The Standard Bearer  
c/o B. VanHerik  
66 Fraser St.  
Wainuiomata, New Zealand  
NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE  
c/o Mr. Jonathan McAuley  
164 Church Rd., Glenwherry  
Ballymena, Co. Antrim BT42 3EL  
Northern Ireland

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In This Issue ...

In this first issue of the new year, several articles direct the attention of the readers to the future. In his meditation, Rev. Cornelius Hanks reminds us that "we have not traveled this way before" and that "we dare not venture into this year alone." Needed is the assurance of the promise, "My presence shall go before thee."

The editorial calls the church to her work in the new year. A.D. 1994 will be "fraught with peril" and "full of promise" for the working church.

In his consideration of the word, "sleep," in the Bible, Rev. Kuiper notes that Jehovah God never sleeps. From this, he draws the conclusion that "our lives throughout the new year shall be lives of comfort, safety, and blessing as we put our trust only in God." See "A Word Fitly Spoken."

The poem attributed to John Calvin also points the Christian and the church to the future. There is the earthly future: "Meet Thou the rage of Anti-Christ/ Break Thou his nets in two." There is the future of eternity: "Make us to see God's face in peace/ Through Thee, our Advocate."

The beginning of a new year is the ending of the old. This brings home the brevity of the life of us all: "Remember, O man, you must die." Emeritus minister Cornelius Hanks, now 86 years old, relates the dying of certain of the saints for our instruction and comfort. Read "Death's Triumph."

God bless His church and make her work fruitful in the year of our Lord 1994, while she prays, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly."

— DJE



# God's Indispensable Presence

*My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.*

Exodus 33:14.

1994 — We enter a new year in a world in which iniquity abounds. As believers in Christ Jesus we have been delivered from Egypt, the house of bondage of sin and death, and we wend our way through these desert wastes to the promised land, our heavenly Canaan. We have not traveled this way before. We cannot, we dare not, venture into this year alone.

\* \* \* \* \*

Fear of the future burdened the soul of Moses in that dark hour of Israel's history at Sinai.

The Lord had said: "Depart, and go up hence, thou and the people thou hast brought up out of the land of Egypt."

To that, Moses responded: "Thou hast not let me know whom thou wilt send with me."

Obviously, alone he did not dare, nor was he able to lead this great multitude of men, women, and children with all their sheep and cattle through the wilderness that still lay between them and Canaan. For the Lord had given every indication that He would not accompany them on their way.

The people whom God had brought out of the land of Egypt amid signs and wonders, the people whom He had led through the Red Sea and then brought along the way with signs

and wonders, the people whom God had now taken into His covenant at Sinai, had grievously sinned against Him. They had broken His covenant only shortly after it was established, by making a golden calf like one of the gods of Egypt and then dancing about the idol in their wicked orgies.

The Lord was very angry with them for having added this horrible sin to all their previous sins. Moses therefore called all those who were on the Lord's side to separate themselves and to punish with death those who still reveled in their sin. In his zeal for his God he even offered to have his name stricken from the Book of life, that this people might be spared and God's Name not be brought into dishonor among the nations.

Now the Lord was sending Moses and the people on their journey, but He had refused to accompany them, lest along the way He should consume them in His wrath for their repeated rebellions. Only Moses, as the Old Testament mediator, and Joshua who had accompanied him on the mount, found favor with God. His wrath still rested on the people.

It was as if God had forsaken them, turned His back on them, and now left them on their own. He was demanding of Moses the impossible. How could Moses possibly go on without Him?

The tabernacle, in which God dwelled among His people, was not built as yet. There was no visible sign of the Lord's presence except in the lighted cloud, and that had been removed from them, because of God's displeasure with them. Who would lead the way? Israel had sinned. They deserved God's just condemna-

tion. But how could they go on without Him?

This is the anxious question that also confronts us as we enter the new year. Who will go before us into the new year? We dare not go alone.

\* \* \* \* \*

This is a good time for a bit of introspection and self-examination.

We are reminded that we have transgressed all God's commandments, and have kept none of them. Still more, as to the coming year, we know that we will not be able to keep God's law perfectly, since we have but a small beginning of the true obedience. Our unfaithfulness is evident especially in our lack of zeal, our failure to seek the glory of our God with thankfulness in all that we think, will, and do.

We deserve that God in anger turns His face from us. Yet His favor is indispensable. With Jacob at the Jabbok we can only cry out: "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." With David we must plead: "Hide not thy face from me, lest I be like them that go down into the pit." And with Moses: "O teach Thou us to count our days and set our hearts on wisdom's ways; turn, Lord, to us in our distress, in mercy now Thy servant bless" (*Psalter* number 246).

\* \* \* \* \*

The cloud of glory descended on the tent of meeting outside the camp whenever Moses and Aaron were present there. To that refuge the repentant sinners fled to confess their sin and to seek forgiveness. It was only by way of confession of sin that they found mercy with God. And then only in the promised Savior, who would atone for those given Him

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



of the Father by obedient self-surrender outside the camp (Heb. 13:12, 13).

Only upon confession of their sin did God assure Moses: "My presence (literally, My face) shall go with thee."

\* \* \* \* \*

This Presence was none other than the Angel of Jehovah, the Old Testament manifestation of the eternal Christ. He is the Son of God who is eternally ordained of God as Chief Servant in His House. He is the Word, the revelation of the Father; that is, He reveals the infinite fullness of the God of our salvation in all His glorious perfections. He is Jesus, who saves His people from their sins.

He had come to Abraham with two angels to dine and commune with him in intimate covenant fellowship. He had wrestled with Jacob and blessed him. He had appeared to Moses at the burning bush, sending him to Egypt to deliver Israel. He was the Angel of death who slew all the firstborn of Egypt. In the lighted cloud He had led Israel through the Red Sea to safety and freedom from slavery. And He had brought them to Sinai. He had now been temporarily withdrawn, along with the tent of meeting, yet was still in evidence. Even as the Holy Spirit withdraws from our consciousness when we sin, leaving us miserable in our guilt, so also God had withdrawn from Israel for the moment. But the fact that He still spoke with Moses showed that He had not completely cast them off to perish in the wilderness.

Moses and Israel had to learn anew from God at Sinai that they who confess and forsake their sins find mercy. Only he who comes with a broken and contrite heart is acceptable to God and is assured that he is justified, as if he never had had any sin. Only when Israel confessed their sin did God assure them: "My presence will go with thee."

That applies also to us. We deserve only that God casts us off, gives us over to our sins, to perish in the arid wastes of this present world. It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed.

It is only because of His unchang-

ing love in Christ Jesus, revealed in abundant mercies, that the Lord is with us as churches and as individuals, and will go before us, leading the way through the coming year. That must also be our prayer.

\* \* \* \* \*

We have a much richer presence of God than Israel ever could have had in the old dispensation. They lived under the promise and in the hope of the Savior still to come. We have seen the fulfillment of this promise in His birth in Bethlehem. God came so very much nearer to us when the Son of God took on our flesh and blood from the virgin Mary. He dwelt among us, as one like unto us in all things except sin. He suffered and died to atone for our sins, is risen from the dead, and is gone into glory to reign over us and to bless us out of heaven.

We now even have Christ in heaven and His presence by His Spirit in our hearts to comfort, sustain, and bless us. We also have the complete Scriptures, the infallible Word of God, to lead us in the way that we should go. And we have direct access to the throne of grace through our Mediator who intercedes for us.

Therefore our life and our hope for the future are far richer than Israel of old could ever know.

\* \* \* \* \*

To them and to us comes the promise, "and I will give thee rest."

That meant for Israel the promised land of Canaan. For forty years God led them through the desert from one resting place to another. For forty years He was grieved by that rebellious people. All those who were twenty years and older when they left Egypt perished in the wilderness. Moses, who was the meekest of all men, could not bear up under their constant complaint. He was prevented from entering with them into the promised land.

Yet, for all that, the Lord's mercies were renewed every morning, and His faithfulness provided for them all the day long.

How is that possible for them and for us? God sees His elect people as

redeemed, justified, and sanctified in Christ Jesus. He regards us as a chosen generation, a holy people, a royal priesthood. He who glories must glory in the Lord.

Glorious things of thee are spoken, for there remains a rest for that people. Jehovah spoke to Israel of the Christ in the manna that fed them and through the Rock that supplied them with water along the way (I Cor. 10:3, 4). The Angel of Jehovah drove out the enemy before them and gave them Canaan as a land of their inheritance, even as promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. For true, spiritual Israel this land of rest was a picture of a better country, the eternal Land that never ceases to flow with spiritual milk and honey.

\* \* \* \* \*

We, too, are but pilgrims and strangers on the earth, seeking a better home, eternal in the heavens. We make our journey through the arid wastes of this world, always conscious of the fact that we have here no abiding city, but we seek one to come. For there remains a rest for the people of God.

We are but passing through. Yet so readily we cling to the things of this world, as if this life were our only goal. So readily we choose our idols, forsaking the Lord by our sinful lusts.

Therefore, as we stand before another year with all its temptations and trials, with all its threats to our faith, we dare not, cannot, venture out alone. We can never make it to our journey's end, the eternal rest, alone.

We know not what awaits us. But this we know, God's presence with His favor is more to us than life itself!

We need the assurance: "My presence shall go before thee; and I will give thee rest." That rest, that heavenly Canaan, must always be the goal of our lives.

May our God bless and keep us, both as churches and as individuals. May He lift His Face (His Presence, His Christ) upon us and be gracious unto us. May His Face shine upon us and give us peace. □



# The Church in the New Year: Called to Work

What 1994 will mean for the true church in North America is not our concern. We may not speculate. This belongs to the secret things of the counsel of God that are exclusively for Him. It is comfort to the Reformed church, as it is to the believer personally, that the new year will be the unfolding of the eternal plan of the sovereign God in the exalted Lord Jesus Christ.

Our concern is the revealed will of God for the church. His will is that the church work. The reason for the continuation of history in this new year is the church. God has a church that must be gathered and saved. Since the Son of God gathers, defends, and preserves this church "by His Spirit and Word" (Heidelberg Catechism, Q. 54) and since He does this through the instrumentality of the true church, the true church has a calling to work.

It is the true church that has a sacred, solemn mandate from the Lord.

The true church is the instituted congregation that is sound in doctrine, pure in the administration of the sacraments, and faithful in the exercise of discipline (Belgic Confession, Art. 29).

There is also a false church, characterized by rejection of the authority of Holy Scripture and corruption of the gospel of grace. She too has a work. Her work is to hate and oppose the true church. She has her mandate from the devil.

The departing church has one

calling from the Lord, and one only: Repent! It belongs to the work of the true church that she bring this calling from the Lord to the church that is in the process of falling away from the truth.

As true churches (though by no means perfect churches), the Protestant Reformed congregations are called by God to work in 1994. This work is, first, to hold fast what they have. The importance and difficulty of this task for a church should be evident from the widespread abandonment of the fundamentals of the Christian faith by so many churches in our day.

That which we are to hold fast is the Christian faith as set forth in the Reformed creeds. It is the Reformed faith, therefore, with its distinctive doctrines of God's sovereignty both in redemption and providence and of salvation by grace alone. Necessarily implied is the understanding and confession of the creedal Reformed faith by the Protestant Reformed Churches as teaching sovereign, particular grace in the preaching of the gospel and an unconditional covenant of grace with the elect in Christ, Head and Mediator of the covenant.

This faith includes a life of thankfulness, obedience, and holiness.

Holding fast the faith will require tremendous effort in the Spirit of Christ. It will take sound preaching; faithful instruction of the young in catechism; vigilant oversight of the preaching and teaching by capable elders; courageous discipline of those

members who teach or live contrary to the rule; and the right judgment on all issues coming before them by the broader assemblies.

Discipline is essential. A main reason for the apostasy of the departing and the false churches is the failure of the churches to discipline the heretics. Conservatives are great talkers and writers. But without the discipline that shuts the mouths of the gainsayers of the faith and that cuts the cancer of the lie or the unholiness from the body of the church, there can be no holding fast the truth.

Christ's mandate to the true church, secondly, is that she exert herself to grow spiritually. The church must "grow up into him in all things" (Eph. 4:15). Through the exercise and use of the means of grace, there must be growth in knowing Christ, in glorifying and enjoying God, and in loving the neighbor, especially the other members of the congregation. Holding fast the faith does not imply spiritual stagnation.

Thirdly, the true church is called to preach and confess the truth to those outside the church. The PR congregations must engage in missions and evangelism at home and abroad to the utmost of their power. A chief reason for another year is the gathering of the church out of all nations and the bringing to repentance of every member of this elect church (Matt. 28:18-20; II Pet. 3:9).

We ought to address the scattered sheep in the Reformed community, as well as in Protestantism at



large, as God gives us the opportunity, for their help.

We ought to confess boldly to a hostile world, for its condemnation. Against its theory of evolution, we confess biblical creation. Against its feminism, we confess the biblical family. Against its adultery, we confess the sanctity of biblical marriage.

Apart from other considerations, this work of the true church requires that the faithful congregation live and work together with like-minded congregations in synodical federation. One congregation in her solitude cannot by herself do the work. She cannot do the work of missions. She cannot maintain the seminary that is basic to the defense of the faith and to the church's own spiritual growth. She cannot in the long, or not so long, run even hold fast the faith for herself. Holding fast the faith is done in the unity of the church with the help of the multitude of counselors.

Accounting for the denomination, in the context of the unity of the church, Herman Hoeksema wrote:

This seeking of fellowship and unity of the local congregations is motivated also by the practical need they have of one another, because in unity there is strength. Thus, they need one another to establish a theological seminary for the training of ministers of the Word, for the development of their common confession, and for the fulfillment of their mandate in regard to the work of missions (*Reformed Dogmatics*, pp. 622, 623).

An aspect of the work of the PR congregations in 1994, therefore, will be that they carefully nurture and endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace among themselves in the synodical union.

The church must also know what does not belong to the work assigned

her by her Lord. She is not called to set herself to the task of seeing to it that she grows numerically. Numerical growth is not the business of the church. It is rather the business of the Lord. Just as no one can add an inch to his height, so the church cannot add one member to her fellowship. Just as each of us leaves his physical growth to the Lord, so must the church leave her numerical growth to the Lord.

The church that does labor to grow numerically invariably adopts carnal measures, e.g., watering down the preaching and confession; relaxing the discipline; and introducing entertainment — "contemporary music" and drama. God curses this ambition to grow with cancerous growth that destroys the church as a spiritual body of Christ.

It is not the calling of the PRC in 1994 to grow.

It is their calling to be faithful to the Word of God. Should this mean their loss of members, so be it.

Not that we are opposed to numerical growth. On the contrary, we rejoice in it, if God wills it and accomplishes it. One reason is that this enables us to do still more in the great work that we have as a denomination of churches and as a covenant community. There is today a crying need for a Reformed college in the United States, an institution of higher learn-

ing that is solidly based on and unashamedly faithful to the Reformed confessions. But this demands a sizable supporting constituency.

Neither is it the duty of the true church to Christianize North America. Not one text in all of the Bible gives the church this preposterous mandate.

Nor is it our responsibility to be popular. It is with the church as with the individual Christian, "Woe to you when all men speak well of you." Confession of the truth and a walk in holiness will mean hatred and ridicule.

Let not the PRC with the other true churches of God in the world underestimate the difficulty of the work. 1994 will be fraught with peril. For it is the last hour. The world sinks away to the depths of lawlessness. The nominal church is far advanced in the great apostasy. The god of this world seduces the bride of Christ with a passion.

But neither may the church despair of the possibility of doing the work or even of great and glorious fruits. 1994 is full of promise. For it is, decisively, "anno domini," "the year of the Lord." The risen Christ is Lord in and over 1994. He is also Lord by His Word and Spirit in and over the church. Not only does He give the mandate, but also He Himself carries out the work by means of the church.

The church's work is not in vain in the Lord.

And she knows it.

— DJE

*And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.*

*Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:*

*Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*

*Matthew 28:18-20*



■ Material on the "Five Points of Calvinism"

I am a recent subscriber to the *Standard Bearer* and have been blessed by one or more of the articles in every issue I have received.

Your October 15, 1993 issue was the greatest blessing to date. Please continue with as many doctrinal articles as you deem wise. I am edified and share them with others.

Would you be able to send me a list of the finest 15-25 published (and in print) books and booklets dealing with the five-points of Calvinism? I would deeply appreciate having such a list and reading most, if not all, of the titles you recommend.

Charles Rosson  
Rogers, AR

Response:

Here follows a list of recommended works on the subject of the "Five Points of Calvinism" in alphabetical order. Most are still in print.

1. Boettner, Loraine, "The Reformed Faith" (privately published, 1983).
2. Calvin, John, *Calvin's Calvinism* (Grand Rapids: Reformed Free Publishing Association, repr. n. d.).
3. Cheeseman, John and others, *The Grace of God in the Gospel* (London: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1976).
4. Coppes, Leonard J., *Are Five Points Enough?* (Reformation Education Foundation, 1980).
5. Dabney, Robert L. and Dickinson, Jonathan, *The Five Points of Calvinism* (Harrisonburg, Virginia: Sprinkle, 1992).
6. Engelsma, David J., "A Defense of Calvinism as the Gospel" (South Holland, IL: The Evangelism Committee, repr. 1991).
7. Girardeau, John L., *Calvinism and Evangelical Arminianism* (Harrisonburg, Virginia: Sprinkle, 1984).

8. Girod, Gordon, *The Deeper Faith: An Exposition of the Canons of the Synod of Dordt* (Grand Rapids: Baker, repr. 1978).

— *The Way of Salvation* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1960).

9. Hanko, Herman, Hoeksema, Homer C., and VanBaren, Gise J., *The Five Points of Calvinism* (Grand Rapids: RFPA, 1976).

10. Harbach, R. C., "Calvinism ... the Truth (Arminianism the Lie)" (Grand Rapids: Sunday School of the First Protestant Reformed Church, repr. 1984).

11. Hoeksema, Herman, "Who-soever Will" (Grand Rapids: RFPA, repr. 1980).

12. Hoeksema, Homer C., *The Voice of Our Fathers* (Grand Rapids: RFPA, 1980).

13. Kistemaker, Simon J., *Calvinism: Its History, Principles and Perspectives* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1966).

14. Luther, Martin, *The Bondage of the Will*, tr. J. I. Packer and O. R. Johnston (London: James Clarke & Co., LTD., 1957).

15. Ness, Christopher, *An Anti-dote against Arminianism* (Edmonton, AB Canada: Still Waters Revival Books, repr. 1988).

16. Owen, John, *A Display of Arminianism* (Edmonton, AB Canada: Still Waters Revival Books, repr. 1989).

17. Palmer, Edwin H., *The Five Points of Calvinism* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1972).

18. Seaton, W. J., "The Five Points of Calvinism" (London: The Banner of Truth Trust, n. d.).

19. Spencer, Duane E., *Tulip: The Five Points of Calvinism in the Light of Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979).

20. Spurgeon, Charles H., *Spurgeon on the Five Points* (MacDill AFB, Florida: Tyndale Bible Society, n. d.).

21. Steele, David N. and Thomas, Curtis C., *The Five Points of Calvin-*

*ism, Defined, Defended, Documented* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1963).

22. Warfield, Benjamin B., *The Plan of Salvation* (Boonton, NJ: Simpson Publishing Company, repr. 1989).

Be sure to read carefully the Reformed confession, the Canons of Dordt, itself, in which the five fundamental truths of the gospel of salvation by grace alone are explained and defended against the Arminian heresy.

— Ed.

■ More on the Death Penalty for Homosexuals

It is with a great deal of interest that I have followed Rev. Cammenga's articles on "The Shameful Sin of Homosexuality." I can only express appreciation of the whole series as presented in the *Standard Bearer*.

From the outset I would also like to identify myself as one of those who took exception to Rev. Cammenga's comment that "the death penalty on homosexuals in our day ought to be enforced." In responding to this I received much encouragement from Rev. Cammenga's own words that "for now, at least, I would stand by my original statement." This indicates to me that in my response I am not dealing with a person having a closed mind on the matter.

I for one find it extremely stressful in having disagreement with fellow believers who believe in the infallibility of Scripture, and belonging together in the one Lord and Savior. The purpose of God in placing us in the world is that we must bear witness to the truth, and this truth can come only from the Word of God. It is not Scripture that divides us, but the interpretation of Scripture. I find it a lifelong struggle that, instead of Scripture controlling the mind, the mind always tries to control the Scrip-



tures, with the result that we contaminate it instead of receiving light and perspicuity from it. It is with this in mind that I freely admit that my interpretation of the Scriptures on this point is different from that of Rev. Cammenga. I also believe that according to Hebrews 9:10 we cannot maintain the rigid interpretation of the law of the O.T. dispensation. The rending of the temple veil and the dispersion of the Jews after the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 plainly indicate that these laws are no longer binding upon us. I furthermore believe that the commandment of God in Genesis 9:6, and given to the whole world, carried with it more restrictions than many commentators lead us to believe. If we follow the maxim that Scripture explains Scripture, then we must start from the beginning. We often pride ourselves by saying that we must follow Scripture if clear examples are given, sometimes called creation ordinances, like God creating one wife for Adam. This served as a pattern for all time to come, and hereby condemned polygamy. My question is: Why does this not apply to the first murder which happened in the world, as the words spoken here are so clear and decisive?

The text in question is as follows: "And the Lord said unto him, Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And the Lord set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him" (Gen. 4:15).

Many commentators explain here that God no longer provides for such marks on murderers, but they fail to produce any scriptural evidence. We read in Ecclesiastes 3:14,15, "I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before him. That which hath been is now; and that which is to be hath already been; and God requireth that which is past." In the light of those words the opinion of commentators becomes meaningless. With this in mind we must also understand Genesis 9:6,

"Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man." Indeed serious words and undeniably a command of God which was given for the good of mankind, and more importantly, for the preservation of God's church on earth. The question remains: Did God always require the blood of the murderer? Subsequent history tells us that He did not. Both Moses and David were murderers, but God did not require their blood. I am often amazed, in pointing this out to fellow Christians, how they resort to subterfuges and explain that with David we are dealing with a unique case. Being king and having despotic powers, he was invincible and could not be touched by a higher authority. The Scriptures, however, speak otherwise. In II Samuel 12 David is confronted with a higher Authority, and no escape from this is possible. This higher Authority is also passing sentence. In reading "thou shalt not die" in verse 13 we instantly recognize the same sentence as that which Cain received in the beginning. We do well to discern here that neither David nor Cain were let off the hook. They both received for their crimes a life sentence, of which the magistrates of our day should take careful note.

This does not mean that in our prison system we must cater to the senile and the geriatric, but it does mean that the magistrate is responsible that the murderer cannot repeat his crime as Lamech did in the first world.

Coming to Romans 13:4 I again feel that Rev. Cammenga is too restrictive in his interpretation of this text. We both agree, no doubt, that this "sword of the magistrate" is authorized and also commanded by God to be used, and that this can entail the taking of human life. As Christians we are not divided on this issue when the sword of the magistrate is used against hijackers or armed bandits caught in bank holdups.

My contention is that this sword is not limited only to the taking of life, but also comprises all the other means at the disposal of the magistrate; and

this includes the prison system where the wrath of the magistrate is revealed. A clear text on this is found in I Peter 4:15, "But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters." Scripture does not make separation between the types of punishment meted out here; the murderer is given a place among the other evildoers.

In response to other letter writers I also feel that with Rev. Cammenga's view we will be driven into the camp of the postmillennialist. In their pernicious doctrine they have no room for murderers dwelling amongst them. Their dream has always been to empty the cells on "death row" so that they are prepared for a future millennium. They like to quote Numbers 35:33 in their support: "And the land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it." I feel, however, that as long as there are two persons left on earth there will be bloodshed. To display a Jehu-like zealotry for the Lord will do nothing to improve this world. James and John tried this in Luke 9:55 and received rebuke for it. As Christians we always must be prepared to live among all the other inhabitants God has placed in our way, including the murderers and the homosexuals. They have no place in the church, but we recognize them as the tares in the field placed there by the hand of God.

My final appeal is to the Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 40, Q. & A. 105 dealing with the sixth commandment. The last sentence reads: "Wherefore also the magistrate is armed with the sword, to prevent murder." I find that this statement goes to the very heart of Scriptural truth. The voice of the church, "Thou shalt not kill," needs to be heard in the world more than ever. As long as we are divided on this issue it will, sadly, lose some of its effect. □

B. van Herk  
Wainuiomata, New Zealand



# Sleep

Sleep is a wonderful blessing from God; it is one of the good things that He gives us as He lifts up His countenance upon us. He gives His beloved sleep after they have risen early and labored late (Ps. 127:2). Indeed, the workman needs sleep after the rigors of the day, so that he is refreshed in body and mind for the new day. We can both lie down and sleep when we know that God watches over us, when we have confessed our sins, when our consciences are at rest (Ps. 32:4, 5). The righteous meditate upon God's law day and night (Ps. 1:2); they fall asleep counting God's precious thoughts regarding them, and when they awake they are still with God (Ps. 139:18). All this makes sleep sweet for the laborer, but the abundance of the rich will not allow him to sleep (Eccl. 5:12).

As with vacations, recreation, and leisure, sleep serves the purpose of preparing for labor; it is not to be loved. Those that love sleep are called sluggards (Prov. 6:9); a sleep-loving son causes shame (Prov. 10:5) and will soon wear rags (Prov. 23:21); the slothful farmer, always folding his hands in sleep, will find his fields overgrown with thorns and his fences broken down (Prov. 24:30-34). Poverty comes upon lovers of sleep!

Scripture uses sleep as a symbol of death: Moses slept with his fathers (Deut. 31:16); Job will sleep in the dust (Job 7:21); and Lazarus slept (John 11:11). This usage does not teach "soul sleep" (the notion that between physical death and the resurrection of the body the soul is in limbo of idle repose) but rather indicates that the death of believers is not the final end, nor is it hopeless. Those that believe in Jesus and fall asleep in Jesus (I Thess. 4:14) shall be roused from the dead by the sound of the trumpet (I Cor. 15:51). Nor will those who are alive at the end of the world precede into glory those that sleep.

The Holy Spirit sounds the gravest possible warnings against spiritual drowsiness, slothfulness, indifference, unawareness, and sleep. The

watchmen of Israel (officebearers) were blind, ignorant, as dumb dogs that cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber (Is. 56:10). It is the case that when God wants to punish a people, He gives them bad leaders and officebearers. With the passing of another year, we are reminded of the nearness of the end, of the fact that Jesus comes as a thief in the night, so that always we are to watch for the Master lest we be found sleeping (Mark 13:35, 36). Paul writes in an extended metaphor that it is high time to awake out of sleep, for the night is far spent. We are to put off our night clothes (works of darkness) and put on our work clothes (the armor of light). We are to walk honestly as in the day, not stumbling about in rioting, drunkenness, chambering, or wantonness. For now is our salvation nearer than when we first believed (Rom. 13:11-14). As children of light we are called to watch and be sober, for they that are otherwise are of darkness (I Thess. 5:6, 7).

As we ponder the above uses of the word "sleep" in the Bible, a truth of sublime beauty and significance comes to mind and steals over our souls: the LORD (Jehovah) never sleeps! "He that keepeth thee will not slumber. Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep" (Ps. 121:4). Though God rests (Gen. 2:2), and though He rouses Himself as one awakened out of sleep (a figure in Psalm 78:65 that sets forth God's forbearance regarding the wicked and His longsuffering regarding His people), our God's eyes are always open, full of mercy over His people. The worshipers of other gods must pray often and loudly, for their gods may be on a journey or asleep (I Kings 18:27), but God is always awake to our cries and alert to every danger that threatens us. The elect are graven upon the palms of His hands, they are ever before Him. Our lives throughout the new year shall be lives of comfort, safety, and blessing as we put our trust only in God! □

*Rev. Kuiper is pastor of Southeast Protestant Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan.*



## Chapter 1

# God Is the Creator

Whence is the world?

This is an important question, a question really determining our entire view of Old Testament History.

To this question there are, fundamentally, but two possible kinds of answers: the answer of faith and the answer of unbelief, the answer of revelation and the answer of human philosophy, the answer of the Creator Himself and the answer of the mere creature standing in rebellion against the Creator.

We need not be surprised, therefore, that unbelief invents its own theories of the beginning of the world, and that today the philosophy of evolutionism, the philosophy of a beginning without God, is more widely held and taught than ever before. True, this theory may have undergone various refinements through the years, and it may enjoy an apparently more scientific window-dressing than formerly. But it is a philosophy, not a science. It is a false religion, not the product of laboratory investigation. And as a philosophy which concerns not only the origin of things as such, but also the destiny of things, and also the way that lies between that origin and that destiny, evolutionism is a very current and very dangerous and wholly false philosophy, a prize lie of the devil.

But not less dangerous and more mild, but more dangerous because it is more deceitful and cunning, more insidiously antichristian, is the phi-

losophy of so-called theistic evolutionism in its various forms. Crass evolutionism itself can hardly be an option for a Christian. It is blatantly unbelieving and in flat contradiction of the Word of God. It is a brazen attempt to get God somehow out of the beginning, on the assumption that if God is out of the beginning, He is entirely out. But theistic evolutionism is somewhat different. It claims to be theism — faith in God. And it claims, at the same time, to be evolutionism, which is an unbelieving denial of God the Creator, the God of the Scriptures. It claims, therefore, to reconcile the irreconcilable. It claims to be a mixture of the immiscible, a synthesis of the antithetical. It claims to harmonize faith and unbelief, the truth of God and the denial of the Creator-God, the Word of the Creator and the lie of the creature. No more than fire and water can be mixed, no more than light and darkness can be reconciled, can theism (faith in God) and evolutionism (unbelief) be harmonized. But it is precisely in this pseudo-Christian, antichristian form, according to which the lie of unbelief is dressed up apparently in the garments of the truth, that evolutionism has obtained a foothold in the church, has, in the minds of some, become a debatable question, and has in various forms found its way into interpretations of sacred history.

We hold that one makes a fundamental mistake if he attempts to enter into a scientific debate with an evolutionist, to meet him on his own ground, and to employ human logic and ingenuity to gainsay him. The issue is undebatable; and it is below the true

dignity of a Christian to enter into such debate. The reason for this is that there is no common ground between faith and unbelief. The Christian stands on the basis of the Word of God; the evolutionist (of whatever brand) stands on the basis of human reason, not subject to that Word of God. And because there is no common ground, there can be no proper debate.

The Christian, proceeding from faith and standing on the basis of the Word of God as his sole authority, simply says: "I believe in God the Father, Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth." His position is: "Give me God and His revelation, and I can explain the world." And the church proclaims, without debate: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."

\* \* \* \* \*

God is the Creator.

With the revelation of this truth the Scriptures open. The very first verse of the Bible contains the amazing statement: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." By this declaration we are at once carried far beyond all that eye can see, or ear can hear, or that can arise in the heart of man. It transcends all merely human comprehension. It is not a child of time, nor a finite human intellect, but the eternal and infinite God who speaks here. We are carried in this very first verse of Scripture to the very edge of time, the beginning, and there called to lift up our eyes to the Eternal One, and say, "In the beginning God...." Faith — and emphatically faith alone — faith which is an evidence of things unseen and the

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*The late Homer Hoeksema was professor of Dogmatics and Old Testament in the Protestant Reformed Seminary.*



substance of things hoped for, responds: "By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear" (Heb. 11:3).

This truth, that God is the Creator, is no isolated and insignificant item of truth, disconnected from the revelation of the gospel of our salvation and disconnected from the history of the realization of the wonder of grace. It is not a matter of indifference whether or not the church confesses that God is the Creator. It is not true that the doctrine of creation is concerned only with the origin of things as such, and that for the rest it has no bearing upon the truth of our salvation and no significance for sacred history.

On the contrary, Holy Scripture emphasizes throughout the truth that God is the Creator, and that, too, in such a way that this confession forms an integral part of the faith of the redeemed church. The church, inspired by the Spirit of Christ, the church as it is still in the midst of death and looking for full redemption, loves to sing of God the Creator. Thus in the eighth Psalm: "O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens.... When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of Him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?" (Ps. 8:1, 3, 4). In Psalm 24:1, 2: "The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. For he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods." And in Psalm 33 the righteous are called upon to rejoice in the Lord and to praise Him. For "by the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth." And again: "For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast" (Ps. 33:6, 9).

Especially in times of great stress, when the cause of God's Son and of His covenant seem to suffer defeat in the world, the church appeals for

deliverance to the God that made the heavens and the earth. For creation and redemption are inseparably connected. You cannot deny the one and hold to the other. The philosophy of evolution is not only a denial of God the Creator; it has no salvation. It is the philosophy of despair. But the church looks unto God the Creator for redemption and deliverance. And thus, in Psalm 74:16, 17 the church appeals to Him: "The day is thine, the night also is thine: as for the world and the fullness thereof, thou hast founded them" (Ps. 89:11). Psalm 95 declares of the rock of our salvation that He is a great God and a great King above all gods: "In his hand are the deep places of the earth: the strength of the hills is his also. The sea is his, and he made it: and his hands formed the dry land. O

come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our Maker" (Ps. 95:3-6). And Psalm 102:25 instructs us that of old He has "laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of thy hand." The poet in Psalm 121 declares: "My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth." And in Psalm 124 God's people celebrate their deliverance from their enemies, concluding with the well-known words: "Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth." And once more, in Psalm 146:5, 6 we read: "Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God: Which made heaven, and earth, the sea, and all that therein is: which keepeth truth for ever."

In Isaiah 40, when Zion is called to lift up her voice and to say unto the cities of Judah, "Behold your God," the Lord Himself calls the attention of Zion to the greatness of His power as the Creator as follows: "Who hath

measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with a span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance? Who hath directed the

Spirit of the Lord, or being his counsellor hath taught him?" (vv. 12, 13). And again, in verse 26: "Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth." And again, in verse 28: "Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding." The

Holy One of Israel, who called His servant Cyrus to liberate His people, is the same who "made the earth, and created man upon it: I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded" (Isa. 45:12).

He is the God who "quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were" (Rom. 4:17). He is the God who created all things by and unto Jesus Christ, "the firstborn of every creature and the first begotten of the dead" (Col. 1:15). He is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named (Eph. 3:14, 15). And when the four and twenty elders in the vision of Revelation 4 fall down and worship Him that sitteth upon the throne, this is their adoration: "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created."

Concluding this aspect of our dis-

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salvation....*



cussion, therefore, we may state that it is evident from the emphasis which the Scriptures place upon this truth, in the first place, that it is paramount for the church of Christ in the midst of the world—a matter of life and death for her—to maintain the truth that God is the Creator. To this truth the church must bear witness. She must preach it. She must teach it to her generations. She may not tolerate that her children, her sons and her daughters, be taught anything else in schools and colleges and universities. The church herself must not exchange

this testimony of revelation for the language of the wisdom of man.

In the second place, it should be evident that according to Scripture there exists a close relation between creation and redemption. God the Creator is also the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, not only as the eternal Son, but also as the incarnated Christ, the Lord, whom He hath appointed to be the Head over all things in the world to come. What is more, it is as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (and our Father for His sake) that He is the Creator of the heavens

and the earth. For He, the Christ, in whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins, is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature, and the first begotten of the dead. By Him and for Him were all things created, that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible. And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist (Col. 1:14-17). The Creator is also the Redeemer; and He made all things with a view to redemption. Of God, and through God, and to God are all things. To Him be the glory forever! □

Contribution

Rev. Cornelius Hanko

## Death's Triumph

*During my ministry I had approximately two hundred funerals. Many times I stood at the open grave with the bereaved family. There were also a number of times that I stood at a deathbed, watching as a soul prepared to leave this earthly house and slip away into eternity. I have also had the opportunity of walking down the valley, as it were, with persons who had but a short time to live, until the moment when they drew away into eternity. I was left behind, at times not a little envious.*

*As I share some of these experiences with you, let me assure you that there is nothing morbid about this. All I can say is that death is victory for the saints. The hour of death is their Coronation Day.*

\* \* \* \* \*

I recall an occasion when the time of departure was plainly drawing near. This man lay in a coma, seemingly no longer conscious of the affairs of this life.

Yet there came a moment when

he began to mumble, evidently talking to himself. Shortly thereafter he made motions with his hands, as if he were brushing something aside. Thereupon he folded his hands and audibly prayed: "Forgive us our many transgressions in Jesus' blood."

Then his soul seemed to have come to rest, and soon it departed to join the heavenly throng.

"O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory in our Lord Jesus Christ" (II Cor. 15:55-57).

\* \* \* \* \*

It was shortly after noon that I visited a young mother who knew that the time of her departure was rapidly drawing near.

She was very concerned as she complained, "I cannot leave my family, these young children. What will happen to them?"

I tried to assure her that God had always taken care of them even until now, and would surely continue to do so in the future. In fact, He could

do it better than we ever are able.

She asked me whether I would do all in my power to keep an eye on them, and I assured her I would. What more could I say?

That same day she peacefully entered into the Rest.

"I had fainted, unless I had seen the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart; wait, I say on the Lord" (Ps. 27:13, 14).

\* \* \* \* \*

This aged couple had seen many winters, had weathered many storms, experienced many trials and afflictions of all sorts. They had suffered many heartaches and griefs together, but had also experienced that the Almighty was their Refuge. They knew what it was to be poor, but they also knew that the Lord provided in every need.

The time had come that they would experience the meaning of the words, "... until death us do part."

She stood at his bed and saw him gradually going deeper into the val-

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



ley of death, where she could no longer follow.

As he breathed his last breath she said: "It is hard to part. But God is good."

"And now, Lord, what wait I for? my hope is in thee" (Ps. 39:7).

\* \* \* \* \*

A man 75 years old began through a chain of circumstances to attend our services. When he was a young man he had come to America, but had not bothered to take his church membership papers with him. In fact, he and his family had not attended church all those years until the Lord brought him into our midst.

Before long he desired to make confession of faith. He said that he was deeply aware that he was a sinner and could not die without seeking peace with God.

A few years later I stood at his deathbed. I asked him: "Is all well?" To which he answered: "I am going home."

"... as a firebrand plucked out of the burning" (Amos 4:11).

\* \* \* \* \*

It was a few weeks before she died. She told us that she felt she was dying. It was, she said, like a gradual falling. It seemed as if, as she fell, a light shone, growing brighter and brighter. The light she saw was not an ordinary light, like daylight or like a bright neon light, but far whiter, brighter.

Then, she said, she heard some one calling her, urging her to come back. She was reluctant to do so; but yet, the light faded, and when she opened her eyes the doctor stood over her. He apparently was the one who had called to her.

A week or two later she did pass on into eternity. One wonders whether she again saw the light that grew brighter, and this time did not fade away.

"And the city hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof" (Rev. 21:23).

\* \* \* \* \*

I was called to the hospital one Sunday night. The nurse asked whether I would come to quiet a woman who was greatly disturbed.

That day the doctor had told her that she had only six months to live. This came as a shock to her, because never before had she been sick or seen a doctor, not even when she had her children. Now she really was not so sick, and yet the doctor gave her these tidings. She simply did not believe it.

From then on she had the problem of submitting to the inevitable.

It is true, that it took a struggle. Yet the amazing fact is that the Lord is mighty and merciful to His children.

At times she still tried to maintain that she was getting better, but it was obvious that this was not the case.

Gradually the wonder of grace became more and more evident in her life. She became more submissive, more complacent.

Would you believe that the last time I visited with her she insisted on talking about nothing but heaven? The reason: "I'll soon be there." And she was. The next Sunday it happened.

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, ye may be also" (John 14:1-3).

\* \* \* \* \*

She was a comparatively young girl who had the responsibility of supporting her aged parents, with whom she lived. Suddenly she was stricken with bone cancer, which was extremely painful.

For some time her one concern was her parents. How will they get along? Who will care for them? She wanted somehow to be spared for the sake of her parents.

Soon the excruciating pain demanded all her attention.

A few weeks before she died I asked her: "If the Lord were to per-

form a miracle, would you like to be made better?"

Her answer was: "Oh no, I am so far now, I want to go all the way." The Lord granted the desire of her heart and also cared for those who were left behind. In fact, within a year they followed her into their everlasting abode.

"And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them" (Rev. 14:13).

\* \* \* \* \*

This had been a God-fearing woman, whose walk was always exemplary for her family and for all acquaintances.

Now that her husband was retired she looked forward to a few years of quiet life with him.

But it was not to be. Soon it became evident that her strength was failing. She seemed to suffer from no particular ailment, but she was, nevertheless, fading away, so that before long she was completely bedridden.

The time came when she and her family realized that the Lord would soon take her home.

She remained conscious, her mind was clear, and she continued to speak of the blessed hope, even as her voice weakened. Then she closed her eyes, to open them in glory.

"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints" (Ps. 116:15).

\* \* \* \* \*

Cancer is a dread disease that takes many to their grave. It attacks the old, but it also attacks the young. It is no discerner of persons. It takes also those who fill an active, even important place in the church and in God's kingdom, as was the case with a young woman who called me aside one day to inform me that the doctors had discovered cancer and had told her that she had a half year to live.

Although this had come as quite a shock to her, she was able to surrender herself to the way God was lead-



ing her. She spoke freely of God's promises that can never fail. She patiently bore the suffering that was part of the breaking down of this earthly house of our tabernacle as she looked forward to a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. She cherished the hope that never dies.

By the power of a living faith the desire to live became an ever stronger desire to be with the Lord, which is far better.

Our God, who has begun a good work, will surely finish it.

"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the

faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me in that day" (II Tim. 4:7, 8a).

\* \* \* \* \*

A young girl had suffered all her life. The drawn lines of pain and suffering were evident on her face even as she approached death.

Yet when the Lord sent His angel to take her home, that shadow of pain was lifted away. A smile came to her lips as her whole face seemed to light up with heavenly peace and joy. Is it true that the dying sometimes get a

glimpse of glory as their soul departs to be with the Lord? We can only surmise.

"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Rom. 8:18).

\* \* \* \* \*

*What shall I add to this?*

"Wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city" (Heb. 11:16).

"Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, as also ye do" (I Thess. 4:11). □

### *I Greet Thee, My Redeemer Sure*

I greet Thee, my Redeemer sure,  
I trust in none but Thee,  
Thou who hast borne such toil and shame  
And suffering for me:  
Our hearts from cares and cravings vain  
And foolish fears set free.

Thou art the king compassionate,  
Thou reignest everywhere,  
Almighty Lord, reign Thou in us,  
Rule all we have and are:  
Enlighten us and raise to heaven,  
Amid Thy glories there.

Thou art the life by which we live;  
Our stay and strength's in Thee;  
Uphold us so in face of death,  
What time soe'er it be,  
That we may meet it with strong heart,  
And may die peacefully.

The true and perfect gentleness  
We find in Thee alone;  
Make us to know Thy loveliness,  
Teach us to love Thee known;  
Grant us sweet fellowship with Thee,  
And all who are Thine own.

Our hope is in none else but Thee,  
Faith holds Thy promise fast;  
Be pleased, Lord, to strengthen us,  
Whom Thou redeemed hast,  
To bear all troubles patiently,  
And overcome at last.

Children of Eve and heirs of ill,  
To Thee Thy banished cry;  
To Thee in sorrow's vale we bring  
Our sighs and misery;  
We take the sinners' place and plead;  
Lord, save us, or we die.

Look Thou, our Daysman and High Priest,  
Upon our low estate;  
Make us to see God's face in peace  
Through Thee, our Advocate;  
With Thee, our Saviour, may our feet  
Enter at heaven's gate.

Lord Jesus Christ of holy souls,  
The Bridegroom sweet and true,  
Meet Thou the rage of Anti-Christ,  
Break Thou his nets in two;  
Grant us Thy Spirit's help, Thy will  
In every deed to do.

*John Calvin, 1560*



# Be Still and Know that I Am God

*Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.*

Psalm 46:10

"Be still and know that I am God!" The mighty Word of God Himself! This is the Word He declares throughout all the earth. This is the Word that from beginning to end is found in the Bible. This is also the Word that He speaks as He executes His sovereign counsel and purpose in time and history. This is the Word that the Almighty speaks in His fearful works of providence. "Come, behold the works of the LORD, what desolations He hath made in the earth." This is the Word of God which He speaks as He rules sovereignly among the ungodly nations of the world. This is the Word that God speaks to us in our individual and personal lives.

We are especially reminded of this Word of God in connection with all the recent reports of the natural disasters in the world. We have heard of devastating earthquakes which have killed thousands and thousands of people in a matter of minutes. What misery and sorrow this caused recently in India. Earlier this year there were in our own land the awful floods that ravaged the Midwest. Thousands of acres of land were inundated. Farms were ruined, crops de-

stroyed. In another part of our country millions of dollars of devastation was caused by hurricanes. As I am writing this article in the state of California we are watching the power and destruction of fire storms. In a matter of minutes one million-dollar home after another is being reduced to ashes. Reporters often use the descriptive word "inferno." I looked this word up in a dictionary and found that it means, "a place or state that resembles or suggests hell."

Besides these so-called natural calamities there have been in recent times the great political upheavals in other nations. Who could have guessed that the Berlin Wall would fall as it did in recent years? Who would have imagined that the mighty communist empire of the USSR could have collapsed so suddenly? Day after day we read of the destruction and misery and upheaval of war in country after country. Again, in our own state here in California we have just recently gone through the terrible riots of downtown Los Angeles, "the city of angels."

As the end of time approaches, wickedness and lawlessness abound in our society. Already in their youth the children of our world today are so hardened in wickedness that they commit acts of monstrous and gruesome violence and murder. High schools and even grade schools in many of our big cities are facing shocking problems of gang violence, murders of teachers and students, appalling incidents of assault and gang

rapes and all kinds of other awful things.

We read of all the misery and wretchedness in personal lives and in the homes of our nation. Divorces tear husbands and wives apart. Broken homes cause untold misery for children and create a cycle of misery from one generation to the next. The people of our nation continue to murder their unborn children by the thousands, a horrible thing sanctioned by the law of our land and more and more condoned by rulers in high places. Newspapers are filled with an ever-growing number of reports of child abuse and horrible domestic violence of all types. Dreadful diseases such as cancer, heart disease, and AIDS cause fearful and often prolonged suffering and finally bring thousands to their grave. More and more people in our society are so pessimistic about life that they resort to taking their own life by suicide.

It is in the midst of this world that God speaks: "Be still and know that I am God!" That He is God means that He is the sovereign One. He is the only true and living God. He is God and God alone; there is none else, there is no God beside Him. He is the almighty God who created heaven and earth and still upholds them by His Word and power. He is the fearfully righteous and holy God. He is the God who causes His sovereign counsel to stand. Concerning this God we read that there is none like Him: "Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times

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



the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure" (Isa. 46:10).

This God sends health and prosperity. He gives life and breath and all things to all. He sends peace in our land. He is the giver of every good and perfect gift. He is the source of all good things, the overflowing fountain of good. He is the glorious and blessed and almighty God of salvation in Jesus Christ His Son. He causes the gospel to be preached in all nations of the earth. He gathers His elect people from every tribe and tongue and people. He preserves His beloved church so that the gates of hell cannot prevail against her. He keeps every one of His saints so that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, height nor depth, nor any other creature can separate them from His love.

But this God is also the terrible righteous and holy judge of all men. He judges among the nations of the ungodly who refuse to acknowledge Him and who continue to grow in wickedness and rebellion. He judges whole nations in righteousness. He raises up one nation in great power and casts down another proud and glorious nation according to His sovereign purpose. He has determined in His sovereign counsel that the day will come when He will send His Son Jesus Christ to judge all the nations of the earth. He will break them in pieces in His dreadful anger and consume them in His holy wrath. It is especially this truth that the world hates and seeks to deny. The fearful calamities that happen in the world are a foreshadowing of His coming and of His final terrible judgment on this ungodly world. Let there be no mistake about it. "Be still and know that I am God."

This fearful God also visits with

judgment the evil of man's sin and wickedness in his personal life and in the society in which he lives. God visits the iniquity of the fathers upon the children of those that hate Him unto the third and fourth generation. In His sovereignty God gives reprobate ungodly men over unto their own sin. He casts them into the vile abomination and cesspool of the filth of their own sin. God is so sovereign over sin that He visits sin with sin. Furthermore, He causes wicked men to reap the bitter and dreadful consequences of their own sin. In this He also says, "Be still and know that I am God."

Ungodly men will never listen. They will not be still and know that God is God. They will do everything they can to deny Him, they will rebel against Him, they

will seek to obliterate even from their minds every remembrance of Him, though this is impossible. The ignorant man on the street will do this by his ungodly and barbaric life-style. He fills his life with violence, immorality, and rebellion. The learned men in the colleges and universities of our land, and those in positions of influence and power, do this through their boasted learning, their scientific theories and worldly philosophies. By these they will deny that there is a creator and a God over the earth. The origin of the world, they say, is from eternal existent matter that has evolved over millions of years. Man is nothing more than a highly developed animal that has evolved from a lower species. There is no such thing as absolute morality. There is no absolute difference between right and wrong, good and evil. Morality is nothing more than the prevailing opinion of society; it is relative to the times we live in and is ever changing. Every man really has the freedom to do what is right in his own eyes, as long as he agrees with the prevailing mo-

res of the day and society in which he lives. The misery and wretchedness of our society is merely something inherent in the nature of our world. There is no God of judgment. Some day by political and social progress and scientific advancement man will conquer all the world's problems, and men will all live together in peace and harmony, brotherhood and equality, in the earth. Man is the lord and master of his own destiny. He will preserve his own life, prosper and be strong in the earth, glorify himself, and even direct the course of history according to his own pleasure.

Again and again God sends His judgments upon all of this ungodly philosophy and says: "Be still and know that I am God." But wicked men will be finally silenced only in the day of judgment. Then all will be forced to acknowledge that God is God and that He is righteous and holy in all of His judgments. In that day every mouth shall be stopped and the whole world shall be silent before God. The ungodly reprobate will acknowledge in the eternal misery of hell that God is God and that His judgments are right and true altogether.

But what about us who are called the people of God? Do we listen to the voice of God? Are we so caught up in this world that we do little listening. What about some of our young people? Do they imagine that they can enjoy the pleasures of sin, join themselves with the ungodly, and follow their ungodly life-style? Are they blind to the very clear and constant revelations of the righteous judgment of God upon the way of the wicked that abounds in our modern-day world? Do they imagine that they can perhaps live and walk as the world but escape the judgment and misery and destruction of the world? The God who says, "Be still and know that I am God," warns us in His Word to come out from among the ungodly world and be separate, lest we become partakers of the judgment of the world. God is not mocked by wickedness. How long will we be dull of hearing and imagine that a man can

*The fearful calamities that happen in the world are a foreshadowing of His coming and of His final terrible judgment on this ungodly world.*



prosper in the way of sin? Let us hear the Word of God and be still.

The true people of God will hear, for God's Word is a mighty and powerful Word to them. That God is God is the gospel of our salvation. We need not be afraid. For God will fully accomplish our salvation through the triumph of His Son Jesus Christ. All

of God's righteous and holy judgments have fallen on Christ Jesus and He has carried them all away. We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. We need not fear the wickedness of the world nor the terrible judgments of God that we see in the world. For God is our God, the God of our salvation. In quiet trust in

Him is our strength and comfort. He will realize His counsel and cause all things to glorify His name. From His Word we know that He will be exalted in the earth — through the righteous judgments of the ungodly, and through the salvation of His people. His name shall be glorious forever and ever. □

*Taking Heed to the Doctrine*

*Rev. Bernard Woudenberg*

## When Men Think More of Themselves Than They Ought

*For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.*

Romans 12:3

As we have noted in the past, the cause for the breakdown in relationships between the Protestant Reformed Churches in America and the Liberated Church in the Netherlands was not the adoption of the *Declaration of Principles*, as has been frequently claimed. In a sense the *Declaration* did give an occasion for the breakdown to be publicly recognized; but the fact is that, before the *Declaration* was ever written, a Liberated minister from the Netherlands was already going about Canada gathering together immigrants, including those belonging to our congregations, with the purpose of organizing them into Liberated congregations. This was, in effect, par-

ticularly considering the Liberated view of the church, a *de facto* recognition of the fact that they no longer recognized the Protestant Reformed Churches to be the "true church." And to this day the Liberated Church has never drawn back from that. Very clearly, the real cause of this breakdown predated and went deeper than the adoption of the *Declaration*. There were in fact basic differences between us which made the possibility of our working together at best a problematic thing.

This is not to say that we did not have things which drew us together. Already in the thirties Dr. Schilder and Rev. Hoeksema, the father figures to the two denominations, had found distinct common ground between them. Each, working within his own environment, had come to the conclusion that things were not going well within the Dutch Reformed tradition either in the Netherlands or the States. A kind of intellectual snobbery, an arrogance of the educated elite, often termed by the Liberated — perhaps rather unfortunately — "Scholasticism," had set in. What it amounted to was that education, scholarship, and learning were be-

coming the chief concern and authority for those who dominated the Reformed Church.

(I can remember well, in my days as a student at Calvin college, how one could identify someone who was just returning from study at the Free University in Amsterdam by the size of his words. Never was a small word used when a larger one could be found — no matter how incomprehensible it might make what was being said. To sound learned was the important thing.)

In a large part, this flowed rather naturally from Dr. Abraham Kuyper himself. Unquestionably Kuyper had filled a foundational place in the development of the Reformed faith. Having returned to the creedal truths of the Reformed faith from modern liberalism by means of a sincere conversion, he had succeeded in calling large numbers to follow him. Spiritually sensitive, and working closely with the Word of God, he had been able to use his extraordinary intellect to expound the Reformed faith and apply it to life in a way that ordinary people understood. The result had been the development of a class of common folk, often with little formal

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*Rev. Woudenberg is pastor of the Protestant Reformed Church of Kalamazoo, Michigan.*



education, who so mastered the fine points of theological distinction as to put to shame many a highly educated man. There was, for a brief time in Dutch history, a period in which the whole land was taken up with some of the most profound truths of Scripture, both in learning them and in applying them. Kuyper was the leader; and his scholarship influenced the whole land. It was his strength, and in the end, perhaps, the undoing of his cause.

But great men tend to produce imitators; and Kuyper had plenty of them. One of his first great efforts was the establishment of the Free University; and from there his influence spread. He edited a newspaper and journals, wrote books, and established organizations to apply his teachings in every area of life, finally himself becoming prime minister of the land. And all was done with a scholarly flourish that left its impress on everything he did. His followers sought to do the same. Many were, beyond question, sincere men who learned from him, sought to grasp his principles and to build on them — a group among which both Schilder and Hoeksema could be counted. But there were others who sought nothing more than to imitate his style, and gain to themselves his power. For them the appearance of scholarship was what counted, as though, as in ancient Socratic tradition, their intellectual attainments included also the right to rule.

Neither Rev. Hoeksema nor Dr. Schilder, however, was this kind of imitator. They were followers of Kuyper, but of the earlier Kuyper, the expositor and reformer, rather than the later scholar and politician vying for influence in the land. Not as though they were not scholars; it was just that, for them, their studies were in the Word of God, and in ministry to His little people. That was the important thing.

Rev. Hoeksema was a child of poverty. Raised, first on the streets of Groningen, and later amid Chicago's factory lanes, he received his education first in a trade school in the Neth-

erlands. Prepared to be a blacksmith, a worker in wrought iron, his education was simple but basic, providing him with the basic principles of good learning upon which he later built. But he was never ashamed of this working-class origin. He kept a forge in the basement of his home all of his days. Neither did he ever despise any ordinary working man. In fact, they were his concern. His first effort as a preacher was always to explain the gospel in terms simple enough for everyone to understand. It was his strength. No one ever had to listen to Hoeksema and wonder what he meant. His words were eloquent in their simplicity, and throughout his ministry they maintained a close bond of rapport between him and his large, working-class congregation. The members of his church followed his every word, grew in the knowledge of Scripture, and lived together in the fellowship of the Word. Throughout his life Hoeksema may have taught a full curriculum to his theological students, wrote books and edited the *Standard Bearer* (a large part of which he wrote himself); but closest to his heart was the pastoral relationship he had with his congregation as he spoke to them of God's Word. He loved to preach; and they loved to hear.

Apparently it was much the same with Dr. Schilder. Although we know little of his personal life (even K. C. Van Spronson in his biography of Schilder, written from the viewpoint of a close personal friend, tells little of Schilder's family life, either as a child or as a man), he apparently as a preacher and writer spoke to common people more than to anyone else. They filled the churches where he preached; and they made his paper, the *Reformatie*, the most widely read in the land. Schilder had no interest in displaying his learning; he, like Hoeksema, spoke to the people in words they could comprehend.

And that was what got both of them in trouble.

Very early in Hoeksema's career it became apparent: first, that his interest was in using his abilities in expounding the Word of God; and,

secondly, that in doing so he was able to gain a strong following among the members of the church. He could hold the attention and loyalty of the masses, particularly when he challenged those who claimed authority based on their own learning. And that to them was a threat. As one of them said to me rather candidly many years later, "We had to get rid of Hoeksema, else he would have gotten rid of us." They saw where he was going; and they moved against him while they still could.

So in reality it was with Schilder. The circumstances were different; and it occurred later in his career. His base was already established — the *Reformatie* having become the most widely read church-paper in the land. But those who coveted his influence found their opportunity under the cover of the Second World War. Schilder, having spoken out against the Nazis, was driven into hiding. As cynical and cowardly as it was, Schilder's enemies used that opportunity to strike out against him and depose him when he was unable to speak or act in his own defense. His popularity with the people had become a threat to them as well; and they had to get rid of him: when they could.

This drew Hoeksema and Schilder together. Two men of a kind, both were despised by their colleagues for doing what they were called to do, feed the sheep of God; both were rejected by men who thought of themselves and their learning more highly than they ought. In many ways these two men were different, and their theologies differed as well; but underneath they felt themselves caught up in the same spiritual war. They were convinced that, with their common respect for each other, and their common commitment to the Word of God, given an opportunity, they would be able to work out the differences they had. But it was never to come.

On the one hand, providence intervened. After meeting in 1939, they had undoubtedly expected to continue working together, only to find



meaningful contact cut off by the war. And then, when at last the war was over, and Dr. Schilder made plans to make another visit in which they might take up where they had left off, Rev. Hoeksema was laid low with a massive stroke. The visit was made; but little of substance could be done. In fact, as we have seen, by the time Hoeksema recovered, the relationship between their two denominations had fallen into the hands of lesser men, leaving it so confused and troubled that further real dialogue could no longer take place. It was apparently not the Lord's will that meaningful consultations between these two men, who had meant so much to each other for so long, should ever come to pass.

Nor, for that matter, can it be assumed that even under the best of circumstances it could have worked. The fact is that there were fundamental differences between these men and their theologies; and, given the strength of their character and the convictions of these two men, the likelihood that a meaningful agreement between them could ever have been gained is probably rather small. They may have shared a mutual disgust for the shallow intellectualism which had come to dominate the Reformed church world, but as to what constituted its cause, they were hardly agreed.

With Hoeksema the answer was clear and simple. It was common grace, the theory Kuyper had devised

to excuse his involvement with the learning and ways of the world. It had caught on with his imitators, and had carried them far away from God's Word. Common grace was what lay at the root of it all.

But for Schilder it was different. It was not that he questioned what Hoeksema said on common grace; he had no love for it either. But that was not where his battle was fought. His opponents had engaged him on the subject of the covenant, and for him that was the crucial thing. But on that subject he differed as much with Hoeksema as he did with those that expelled him, though in a different way.

To this we must turn next time. □

*Decency And Order*

*Rev. Ron Cammenga*

# Care of Scattered Groups of Believers

*"Places where as yet no consistory can be constituted shall be placed under the care of a neighboring consistory."*

*Church Order, Article 39.*

## HISTORY OF THIS ARTICLE

This article dates back to the early history of the Reformed churches in the Netherlands. Already the Synod of Emden, 1571, concerned itself with the gathering of scattered groups of Reformed believers. The Synod urged classes and consistories to labor in nearby cities and villages where congregations had not yet been established. Special attention was to be paid to dispersed believers, those who had fled to other localities because of

persecution. Consistories should do everything in their power to assist these dispersed in the establishment of congregations in their new places of residence. Ministers and elders should visit these cities and make contact with these dispersed brethren, as well as others who might be interested.

The Synod of 's Gravenhage, 1586, decided: "In places where as yet there is no consistory, the classis shall in the meantime do what otherwise the consistory according to the provision of this *Church Order* is charged to do." The Synod of Dordt, 1618-'19, adopted the provision of 's Gravenhage.

Our present article, however, calls for these unorganized groups of believers to "... be placed under the care of a *neighboring consistory*." This reflects the revision of Article 39 by the

Dutch Reformed churches in 1905 and the Christian Reformed Church in 1914. The explanation for this revision is that there were those who felt that a classis did not have the jurisdiction to do what properly belongs to the work of a consistory, particularly the administration of the means of grace. By giving the classis the right to "... do what otherwise the consistory..." was supposed to do, the old *Church Orders* had gone too far.

There is, therefore, a very sound church political principle that stands behind our present Article 39. By placing scattered groups of believers under the care of neighboring consistories, the article safeguards the truth that the means of grace have been committed to the local congregation, not to the classis or synod.

From this history it becomes plain

*Rev. Cammenga is pastor of Southwest Protestant Reformed Church in Grandville, Michigan*



that our fathers were deeply interested in church extension work and the establishment of new congregations. When it was not feasible for a group to be immediately organized into a congregation, there was concern that they be cared for. Even a small group of believers was not to be neglected.

## IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLE 39

There are several reasons why it may not be wise to organize a group into a local congregation. The group may be too small to be able to exist as a viable congregation. Usually this is the case with a group of less than 10 families. Organization may not be possible because there is not sufficient officebearer material in the group. Or it may be the case that the group is not sufficiently grounded in the Reformed faith or informed in the Christian life.

The question is: "What is to be done in the meantime?" There are basically two possibilities. It is possible that the locale where the group is meeting be declared a denominational mission field. In this case, a neighboring congregation would be designated the calling church. In conjunction with the denominational Mission Committee, a missionary would be called. By obtaining a missionary, the group would have the benefit of the sustained presence of a man working among them.

The other possibility is that the provision of Article 39 be implemented. In this case, the group would be placed under the care of a neighboring consistory. This neighboring consistory would make provision for the administration of the means of grace among them and take spiritual supervision over them.

What factors would determine which of the two possibilities would be most advantageous? Certainly the desire of the group itself would enter in. The availability of manpower may be a factor. Realistically, is it a good possibility that a missionary will be secured to work the area if it is declared a denominational mission

field? How near to organization is the group? It may be better to implement the provision of Article 39 than to call a missionary in the case of a group that is near organization and has adequate officebearer material. The question of cost may enter in to some extent. Which alternative is the best stewardship of the resources available to the denomination? And is there a "neighboring" consistory, that is, a consistory in close enough proximity that it can implement the requirements of Article 39?

Groups of believers "shall be placed" under the care of a neighboring consistory. Shall be placed by whom? The answer is: by the classis. The classis must make the determination as to whether or not Article 39 ought to be implemented in a given situation. And the classis must determine to what consistory the care of a group of believers shall be entrusted. Under most circumstances a group would itself petition the classis for consideration under Article 39.

The "care" of a neighboring consistory implies seeing to it that the group has regular preaching, catechetical instruction, and administration of the sacraments. This "care" requires supervision by the elders and the presence of the elders at the worship services and administration of the sacraments. Family visitation would also be appropriate.

By a "neighboring" consistory is meant a consistory that is geographically near the group. This is somewhat relative in our day of modern transportation and communication. It is much easier to be a "neighboring" consistory today than it would have been a couple of generations ago. But if there is no consistory that is near the group, the provisions of Article 39 ought not to be implemented.

## THE DECISION APPENDED TO ARTICLE 39

The following decision has been appended by our churches to Article 39.

If possible the organization of a congregation shall precede the adminis-

tration of the sacraments. However, if the conditions are not ripe for the organization of a congregation, such members are to be enrolled in an adjoining congregation, and thus the sacraments can be administered under the supervision of that consistory. However, this shall not be without the accompanying preaching of the Word, nor without sufficient representation of the consistory to have supervision of the administration.

This decision provides for the possibility of the members of an unorganized group becoming members of the congregation under whose care they have been placed. In fact, if the provisions of Article 39 are implemented, these believers and families would have this right. This would then make possible the administration of the sacraments among the members of the group. This administration would, of course, be under the supervision of the consistory under whose care they have been placed.

The decision of our churches at the Synod of 1981 with regard to the administration of baptism on the mission field would have application to this situation. Here follows that decision.

Synod is presented with the new advice of Preadvice Committee I regarding Baptism on the Mission Field.

### A. Introduction:

Our committee felt that after many years of discussion and debate that the Synod of 1981 has come to a significant state of agreement. We therefore present our advice based on this agreement as a succinct statement on Baptism on the Mission Field.

### B. Advice:

1. We advise Synod to declare that Scripture and our Confessions (major and minor) charge the missionary with the task of preaching and baptizing.

Grounds: Matthew 28:19, 20; Mark 16:15, 16; Apostolic practice: Acts 2:38, 41; 8:12, 13, 16, 38; 9:18; 10:47, 48; 16:14, 15, 33; 18:8; 19:5.

-Adopted

2. We advise Synod to declare that the command of the Lord to baptize is clearly expressed in the



second duty of the Form for the Ordination of Missionaries, "...thou art holden if it pleases God to make thy work fruitful unto the gathering of a church, ("gemeente") to administer the Sacrament of Holy Baptism according to the institution of the Lord and the requirement of the covenant."

a. The question remains, what is the meaning of this limiting "if" clause, viz., when may the missionary baptize?

b. Regarding this question we advise Synod to declare that this means:

1) When the preaching and teaching of the missionary is fruitful and there are proper candidates who are Reformed in doctrine and walk, Acts 16:14, 15, 30-34.

2) This must be determined by the calling church upon solid evidence furnished by the missionary in conjunction with the Mission Committee (Foreign or Domestic).

Amend to add the word "sufficient" between the words "are" and "proper."

-Defeated

Amend to place parentheses around "s" of candidates in 2a.

-Defeated

Amend to add after "candidates" the words, "and their households" in parentheses.

-Adopted

Motion as once amended.

-Adopted

3. Synod declares that it is clear from the Scriptures cited above and from the second duty of the missionary that this baptism must be done unto the gathering of a church ("gemeente"). Therefore it is crucial that a church be instituted as soon as feasible.

a. With respect to a specific field this can only be determined by the calling consistory upon the advice of the missionary in conjunction with the mission committee.

b. The precise moment of readiness for institution cannot be legislated by Synod.

-Adopted □

# The Story of Two Fredericks (3)

## Introduction

Frederick III, better known as The Pious, has gone down in history as the father of the Heidelberg Catechism. This alone is sufficient to secure for him a cherished place in the memory of God's people.

But from a certain point of view this was not the spiritually high point of Frederick's life. After all, although he ordered the Catechism to be written, he did not compose it himself. Probably the clearest touch of his finger on the Catechism is Question & Answer 80, dealing with the popish mass, which Frederick ordered inserted into the original edition. But the high-water mark of Frederick's own commitment to the Reformation came at the Diet of Augsburg in 1566.

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

To the story of that stirring event we now turn.

## The Diet of Augsburg

A few brief statements about the background will help to put this important meeting in perspective.

The attacks made against the Heidelberg Catechism were many and fierce. They came from almost all quarters. The Roman Catholics hated it for its sharp condemnation of their many sins. The Lutherans were no less affronted by it, both because it constituted a threat to their domination in Germany and because the attacks made against their position on the sacrament of the Lord's Supper were no less sharp than those made against Rome. But, clearly, the more popular it became and the more widely it was hailed for its quiet beauty and deep comfort, the more vicious became the attacks.

Maximilian II was emperor of Germany. He was deeply devoted to

the cause of Roman Catholicism, but was prevented from exterminating either Lutheranism or Calvinism by events which continued to crowd in on his life and distract his attention. Notably, the Turks were knocking on the Eastern door of Europe and were threatening to overrun the continent, to engulf Europe in a tidal wave of Mohammedanism. He was, therefore, content to abide by the provisions of the Peace of Augsburg (1555) in which Lutherans and Roman Catholics had come to a tenuous agreement that the ruler of each province would decide the religion of that province. The difficulty was that the Peace of Augsburg made no provision for Calvinism — it was an agreement between Lutherans and Roman Catholics. Frederick III was a Calvinist.

Maximilian summoned a Diet to decide on various problems confronting Germany, including the problem of the Turkish threat. But on the agenda was also an item ominous for



Frederick: "How to check the destructive and corrupting sects." By virtue of his sponsorship of the Heidelberg Catechism, Frederick had been specifically charged with violating the Peace of Augsburg.

Considered a heretic by Roman Catholics and Lutherans, Frederick was in danger of losing everything at the Diet, including his life. Because of the danger, his closest friends urged him not to go. But, as with Luther before the Diet of Worms, so Frederick was convinced that a faithful testimony to the truth required his presence. He responded to one friend:

I find consolation in the hope that the Almighty power of my dear and faithful Heavenly Father will use me as an instrument for the confession of His name in these days in the holy empire of the German nation, not only by word of mouth, but also by act.... I know ... that the same God who kept [Duke John Frederick] in the true knowledge of the holy Gospel is still living, and is well able to preserve me, a poor, simple man, and, by the power of the Holy Ghost, will certainly do it, even if it should come to this that blood must be spilt. And should it please my God and Father in heaven thus to honor me, I should never be able to thank Him sufficiently for it, either in time or in eternity.

His own family bade him farewell with tears, certain that they would never again see him on earth.

At the Diet, almost all were against him, including the emperor. When the business of "destructive and corrupting sects" came up, Frederick was summoned before the emperor, by whom he was given the choice: Either retract your position or suffer deposition. Lutherans and Roman Catholics alike eagerly nodded agreement. Only the small huddled group of Calvinists wondered what would happen and even half-seriously wished Frederick would capitulate.

We cannot quote here the speech Frederick made in his own defense, although it has come down through the ages preserved for us. Only a few

scattered quotes of the speech, which could not have lasted more than five minutes, will have to suffice.

... I promise myself ... that his Imperial Majesty ... will graciously hear and weigh the defence I shall make; which, if it were required, I would be ready to make undaunted in the center of the market place in this town. So far as matters of a religious nature are involved, I confess freely that in those things which concern the conscience, I acknowledge as Master, only Him, who is Lord of lords and King of kings. For the question here is not in regard to a cap of flesh, but it pertains to the soul and its salvation, for which I am indebted alone to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and which, as his gift, I will sacredly preserve. Therefore I cannot grant your Imperial Majesty the right of standing in the place of my God and Savior....

That my Catechism, word for word, is drawn, not from human, but from divine sources the references that stand in the margin will show. For this reason also certain theologians have in vain wearied themselves in attacking it, since it has been shown them by the open Scriptures how baseless is their opposition. What I have elsewhere publicly declared to your Majesty in a full assembly of princes; namely, that if any one of whatever age, station or class he may be, even the humblest, can teach me something better from the Holy Scriptures, I will thank him from the bottom of my heart and be readily obedient to the divine truth.... Should it please your Imperial Majesty to undertake this task, I would regard it as the greatest favor.... With this, my explanation, I hope your Imperial Majesty will be satisfied.... Should contrary to my expectations, my defense ... not be regarded of any account, I shall comfort myself in this that my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ has promised to me and to all who believe that whatsoever we lose on earth for His name's sake, we shall receive an hundred fold in the life to come.

It was a courageous defense. Everything hung in the balance — even the future of Calvinism in Germany. Elector August of Saxony, the

only one among the princes to support Frederick, tapped him on the shoulder in full view of the entire assembly and said, "Fritz, you are more pious than all of us."

Although the minds of few if any were changed, the godliness of Frederick was so obvious that no one dared to press the accusation brought against him. He was able to leave the Diet in peace and continue his work.

### The Last Years

The victory at Augsburg was significant, for it saved Calvinism in Germany from Lutheran and Roman Catholic domination.

But Frederick really never knew any peace, even within his beloved Palatinate. Although the controversy over the question of the presence of Christ in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper was settled by the adoption of the Heidelberg Catechism, other controversies plagued the province. One of the most serious was a controversy over discipline, particularly whether the church or the State would exercise discipline in the Palatinate. Calvin had settled the problem in Geneva after a long struggle with the authorities in that city; but Lutheranism, with Luther's encouragement, had always tended towards giving ecclesiastical discipline to the civil magistrate. The struggle between Calvinism and Lutheranism in the Palatinate brought about this controversy over discipline. Unfortunately, Frederick, a civil ruler himself, favored the position that the State exercised key power in the church as well as sword power in the State.

Shortly after the triumph of Augsburg, Maria, Frederick's devoted wife of 30 years, died. After two years of deep mourning, Frederick married Amelia, a countess of Neuenahr and a widow from the Netherlands. She was related to various French Huguenots and, as a result of this marriage, Frederick's attention was more and more drawn to the sad plight of the suffering Huguenots in France.

Frederick began, in these years, to send his armies to the aid of French



and Dutch Protestants. The French Protestants were being butchered by the Roman Catholic king under the prodding of his Roman Catholic advisers; the Dutch Protestants were being slaughtered by the cruel and merciless Margaret of Parma and the Duke of Alva. Unable to bear the suffering of his fellow saints, and out of sympathy for his agonizing wife, he ordered his troops into France and the Netherlands. Ursinus was opposed to this decision and urged upon Frederick the biblical truth that the cause of Christ in the world was not advanced by the sword and that "they that fight with the sword shall perish with the sword."

The University of Heidelberg gained an international reputation for learning, piety, and strong doctrinal commitment. It had an international faculty and about half of the student body were foreigners. From it went out men to preach and teach in all Europe the great truths of Calvinism.

But Frederick's days were swiftly drawing to a close. His piety in his death was as great as in his life.

Just a few days before he died, he said to his chaplain:

I have lived long enough, both for you and the church. Now I shall be

called to a better life. I have done for the church the best I possibly could, but have not accomplished a great deal. God who can do all things and who cared for his servants before my day, still lives and reigns in heaven. He will not leave you orphan, nor will he leave without fruit the prayers and tears which I have brought to him on my knees in this room for my successors and for the church.

A bit later he was speaking to Olevianus:

The Lord may call me whenever it pleases him. I have a clear conscience in Christ Jesus my Lord, whom I have served with all my heart, and I have lived to see that in my churches and schools the people are directed away from men to him alone.

Just before he died he murmured to those about him:

I have been detained long enough by the prayers of pious Christians. It is time that my earthly life should close, and that I should go to my Savior into heavenly rest.

After asking that Psalm 31 and John 17 be read for him, and after hearing them read, he prayed in a

voice that all heard a very brief prayer and quietly departed this life to be with Christ in glory. It was November, 1576.

Calvin thought so highly of Frederick that he dedicated his commentary on Jeremiah to him. In the concluding paragraph of the Dedication Calvin says:

Though I can add nothing to the character of your Highness, either by my praise or by the dedication of this Work, yet I could not restrain myself from doing what I thought to be my duty. Farewell, Most Illustrious Prince. May God enrich you more and more with His spiritual gifts, keep you long in safety, and render your dignified station prosperous to you and yours (Geneva, July 23, 1563).

No one who loves and cherishes the Heidelberg Catechism ought to forget to breathe a quiet prayer of thanksgiving to God for the gift of Frederick, whom God used to give this blessed creed to us. And no one can read of his courage before kings and rulers without resolving in his own heart, by God's grace, to stand for truth and right with equal dependence upon Christ, in whom we have the victory through faith. □

## News From Our Churches

Mr. Benjamin Wigger

### Ministerial Activities

After Rev. Bruinsma declined their call, the Loveland, CO PRC formed a new trio of the Revs. R. Dykstra, B. Gritters, and C. Haak. From those three they extended a call to Rev. B. Gritters to serve as their next undershepherd.

In late November, Prof. Decker, of our PR Seminary, entered the hospital in Grand Rapids, MI, and submitted to an emergency appendec-

tomy. After suffering some post-operative problems, he was able to return home again on December 4. By God's grace he is making good recovery, and will soon again take up his labors on behalf of all our churches.

As a footnote to the above: Prof. Decker, as well as all our present professors, ministers, and emeritus ministers, covet the prayers of God's saints, not only in their difficult times, but their good times as well. Have you prayed for your pastor today?

### School News

The PR Teachers' Institute held their 39th annual convention at Covenant Christian High School in Grand

Rapids, MI on November 4 and 5. A special invitation was extended to the area churches to anyone interested to attend the Mass Meeting and Inspirational Address on the morning of the 4th. Rev. R. Cammenga, a 1972 graduate of Covenant, spoke on "Dealing with Discouragement: Encouraging our Teachers to Teach."

In early November, the reorganized Lacombe PR School Society met at the Immanuel PRC in Lacombe, AB, Canada, and a new Board was elected. This newly elected Board desires and requests the prayers of all of our churches as it meets to re-evaluate the need for Christian education in the Lacombe area.

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



The students of Hope PR Christian School in Grand Rapids, MI presented a program entitled, "The Knowledge of God," based on Article 2 of the Confession of Faith, on the evening of November 19 at the First Jenison CRC.

The students of the South Holland PR Christian School in South Holland, IL were scheduled to give their All-School Christmas Program on December 16. The students intended to develop the theme "Rich Through His Poverty," based on II Corinthians 8:9.

### Congregational Activities

The Building Committee of the Peace PRC in Lynwood, IL continues, weather permitting, with site work on their property, including parking lot, storm-sewers, trenching for footings and foundation, and the pouring of footings and laying of block foundations.

The Covenant Ladies' Circle, of the First PRC of Edmonton, AB, Canada, recently sponsored a combination car rally and soup supper for their congregation, as well as the congregation of Immanuel PRC in Lacombe.

The Adult Bible Societies of the Grandville, MI PRC sponsored a non-perishable food drive. Plans called for donations to be accepted through Thanksgiving morning, with distribution to be made the next day by Grandville's deacons.

On Thanksgiving morning, November 25, the congregation of the Trinity PRC in Houston, TX, gathered in God's house for their annual Thanksgiving Day service. The congregation, following annual tradition, met in the fellowship hall for Thanksgiving dinner.

### Mission Activities

Revs. M. Joostens and B. Gritters were scheduled to leave for Jamaica on December 7 to fulfill the mandate of our last Synod, to close the mission field there.

### Evangelism Activities

The Council of the Lynden, WA PRC granted the request of their Church Extension Committee to sponsor a congregational evening of "Personal Evangelism" or "Congregational Involvement in Missions." This was scheduled to be held on November 18.

The Evangelism Committee of the Hope PRC in Redlands, CA recently received two nice letters from Soledad Prison, thanking them for the 200 copies of the "Three Forms of Unity," a booklet which they recently sent to them. These letters informed them of how these booklets are being used. One of the letters was from an inmate who is serving a life term. He came to know the Lord while in prison. Since that time he has been led from Arminianism to great appreciation of the Reformed faith.

The Evangelism Committee of the First PRC in Holland, MI has recently placed a cassette tape library in their fellowship room, next to their book library. Sermon tapes from the last few months have been placed there for use by the congregation.

### Food For Thought

"Little more can be said concerning the generality of men, than that they lived, and sinned and died. But concerning all God's people, it may be said that they lived, were converted, preserved to the end, and went to heaven."

A. Toplady,  
Works, p. 545 □

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On December 28, 1993, **MR. and MRS. WILLIAM CLASON** celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. We are thankful for the many years our heavenly Father has given them together and pray for His continuing blessing to rest upon them.

"The Lord is my strength and my shield; and my heart trusted in him, and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; and with my song will I praise him" (Psalm 28:7).

- \* Bill and Anita Lenting  
Michelle (Randy VanDerNoord),  
Rachel, Greg, Brian, Melissa,  
Allyson
- \* Bill and Julie Clason  
Nathan, Monte, Esther, Miriam,  
Billy, Martin, Adam  
3 great-grandchildren

Kalamazoo, MI

### WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On January 6, 1994, our parents and grandparents,

**MR. and MRS. JAKE JABAAY**, will celebrate their 35th wedding anniversary. We are thankful to God for their Christian guidance and loving home, and pray that God may always continue to be with them and bless them. "One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts" (Psalm 145:4).

- \* Berend and Janine Meelker  
Chad, Brent, Deanna, Andrew
- \* Jim and Laurie Jabaay  
David, Michael, Matthew, Katie
- \* Rick and Jill Elzinga  
Megan, Kristen
- \* Jason Jabaay

Redlands, California