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All the Land to You and Your Seed

And the LORD said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward:

For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever.

And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered.

Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee.

Then Abram removed his tent, and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre, which is in Hebron, and built there an altar unto the LORD.

Genesis 13:14-18

There are three things worthy of note in this passage. First, the Lord reaffirmed His promise to Abram to give the land of Canaan to him and his seed.

This promise had been made earlier, as the Lord led Abram into Canaan initially (Gen. 12:7). But there had been a division between Abram and Lot. Lot had left for Sodom and Gomorrah. This was a low point for Abram. And so the Lord reaffirmed His promise.

Secondly, the Lord instructed Abram to journey through the land of promise.

Thirdly, after touring the land, Abram built an altar to worship the Lord.

As we meditate on this passage, we must bear in mind that God's promise to Abram is essentially the same promise He gives to us. He will give to us and our children the land of Canaan. We too must tour the land of promise as Abram did. And we must take our children along with us. As we make that tour we must, with our children, build an altar in order to serve the Lord.



A wonderful promise!

How desolate Abram must have felt. He and Sarai had no children. His only relative, Lot,

had left. And Lot had taken the best of the land, near Sodom and Gomorrah. The Lord appeared to Abram, instructing him to lift up his eyes (were his eyes downcast in discouragement?) and look from the place where he was northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward. Abram was on a ridge between Bethel and Ai. This was a high point of the land, from which he could see a great distance. Northward he could see the mountains that one day would divide Samaria from Judea. Westward and southward he could see what later were Benjamin and Judah. Eastward were the dark mountains of Moab.

A twofold promise was given to Abram. First, the Lord would give to Abram and his seed all the land that Abram could see. Second, the Lord would make Abram's seed to number as many as the dust of the earth, i.e., an innumerable throng.

This promise arose out of God's covenant with Abram. Soon God would promise to establish His covenant with Abram and his seed, for an everlasting covenant (Gen. 17:7).

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That covenant was an intimate relationship of friendship and fellowship, a beautiful relationship that God Himself establishes, maintains, and preserves. In that covenant of friendship the Lord would be the God of Abram and his seed. As their God, the Lord would live with them in intimate fellowship, save them, protect them, and provide for all their needs. This wonderful promise concerning Canaan and Abram's seed arose out of that covenant.

We must be careful to understand the meaning and extent of this promise.

God promised Abram that his seed would be a great number.

It is important to understand who are the seed of Abram. They are not all the Jews, as many claim. The seed of the covenant is not a natural seed but a spiritual one. The great seed of Abram is Christ (Gal. 3:16). It is in Christ that the promises of God's covenant to Abram are realized. In turn, all that belong to Jesus Christ are the seed of Abram. "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Gal. 3:29). We belong to Jesus Christ by faith. Consequently, "they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham" (Gal. 3:7). And behind that faith stands God's eternal election. Where is this believing seed found? In the Old Testament this seed was found almost exclusively among the natural descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Since the coming of Christ, this seed is found among all nations.

The promise to Abram was that this believing seed would be an innumerable throng. "And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered."

But there was more to the promise. God promised that He would give to Abram and his seed the land of Canaan as an everlasting possession. And in Canaan He

would live with them, care for them, provide for them, and bless them forever. This promise was fulfilled, in part, about 400 years later, when God gave to the nation of Israel the land of Canaan for her possession. There the Lord lived and dwelt with Abram's seed for many generations. However, the earthly Canaan was a picture of a heavenly Canaan, i.e., of heaven itself in a new creation. Abram himself understood this, so that, according to Hebrews 11:10 and 16, he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. He desired a better country, that is, an heavenly. This heavenly Canaan was ultimately what Jehovah promised to Abram and his seed.

This promise is to us and our children. As believers we are the spiritual children of Abraham. We too belong to this same covenant. The heavenly Canaan is promised to us in the great seed of Abraham, Jesus Christ. What is most wonderful is that this promise is also to our children. God promises to give us His elect children, with whom He will also establish His covenant. The promise of the heavenly Canaan is to them as well. We can expect to live forever with our covenant children in Canaan under God's blessing.



An important tour!

God called Abram to "Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee." Abram was to do so at that time. During the course of his life, as he sojourned in Canaan, he would traverse much of this territory. However, he was also to take this tour *now*, which evidently he did.

The purpose was to strengthen Abram's faith. What a wonderful promise God had given to Abram. Yet, at this point, he had none of

what God had promised. He had no seed. He owned not one piece of land. It was owned by others, mightier than he. And so it would remain for a long time. It took a strong faith to believe God's promise and live in the hope of its fulfillment. Abram had faith by the work of grace. But his faith needed to be strengthened. This was accomplished at this time by going through the land to see what God had promised.

We are in the same situation. God has promised to us and our seed the heavenly Canaan. We have neither seen it nor do we have a clear conception of what it is like. We have in God's covenant a foretaste of it in the salvation we enjoy. Yet, what awaits us belongs for the most part to that which eye has not seen. We can believe God's promise of the heavenly Canaan and look forward to it in hope only by faith. As members of the covenant we have such a faith. It has been given us by God. But that faith must be strengthened.

We strengthen our faith in God's promise by taking a tour of Canaan. No, we don't take this tour by going to the holy lands. This is a spiritual tour through the Bible, in which we consider the promises of God as well as the works of God in Christ to secure these promises. This tour takes us to the battle scenes of the Old Testament, where God in His power preserved His people in Canaan with great victories over their enemies that were often far superior in strength. This tour takes us to the manger of Bethlehem, where we witness the birth of the Son of

God in our flesh. This tour takes us to the cross, where we witness the atoning work of Christ that obtained for us the heavenly Canaan. This tour takes us to the empty tomb, to witness the resurrection and Christ's exaltation into the glory of the heavenly Canaan. This

*This is a tour
that we must take
daily and continually.*

tour takes us to signs of the times, which assure us that Jesus is coming again to judge the living and the dead.

This is a tour that we must take daily and continually.

This is a tour we must take with our children. Abram did not have any children at this time. But we have children. And the promise is for them as well as for us. We must take them on this tour by teaching them the Scriptures. And where we are not equipped to teach, we must have them taught by the church and, whenever possible, in the Christian school.

The result of such touring will be that we and our children will become strong in faith to believe the wonderful promises of God, to live in hope and to enjoy a rich foretaste of what is to come.



An appropriate altar!
When Abram finished his tour

of Canaan, he built an altar. The location was in the plain of one named Mamre and in what later would be the city of Hebron. This would become one of the centers for Abram's life in the future.

The altar that Abram erected was to worship the Lord. Wherever Abram stayed for a while, he built an altar. At that altar he would call upon the name of the Lord (Gen. 13:4). To call on the name of the Lord is an act of worship. When one calls on the name of the Lord, he thanks and praises God for all the blessings and promises of the Lord. He also seeks the Lord's blessing. This was done in the Old Testament around the altar and the sacrifices that pointed ahead to the great sacrifice of the cross.

This worship was in response to the promise that God gave to Abram. What wonderful promises

Jehovah had given to Abram. Abram had toured the promised land to confirm his faith. The response of faith is to call upon the name of Jehovah in worship, especially to thank and praise the Lord.


This we too must do.

What wonderful promises Jehovah God has given to us His people.

As we tour the promised land in Bible study, our faith in His promise is confirmed.

Let us, then, call on the name of the Lord in worship. Calling on the name of the Lord no longer involves the altar but centers now on the preaching and the sacraments. Let us in gratitude call upon the name of the Lord to praise and thank Him.

Let us do this in our homes and in public worship.

Let us do this also with our children. 

*The response of faith
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Editorial

The Assuring Spirit

Who is it now that actually assures me, a believer in Jesus Christ, not only that the Bible is true and that Jesus Christ is a complete Savior from sin for everyone who trusts in Him, but also that Jesus Christ is *my* Savior? Whence comes the certainty—the *infallible* certainty (which alone is certainty)—that I, even I personally, am saved, have been saved from eternity, and will be saved everlastingly?

Must I assure myself?

Is it the church that assures me?

The answer of Scripture to our question is clear: the one who gives assurance to the children of

God is the Holy Spirit. Romans 8:1-17 identifies the Spirit as the worker of assurance. Verse 15 teaches that all those who believe the gospel that the apostle has been setting forth in the book of Romans cry, "Abba, Father," to the triune, true, and living God.

This is confidence!

This is confidence that God is our Father. We call upon God as our Father in two languages. We call upon God as our Father with the certainty that Jesus Himself had when He cried, "Abba, Father," in Gethsemane (Mark 14:36). We call upon God as our Father with a loud, bold cry.

Our confidence that God is our

Father includes, of course, the certainty that we are His children. We cannot cry, "Abba, Father," without knowing ourselves as the children of this Father.

All believers have this confidence: "*we* cry"—all of us who believe the gospel of sovereign grace as revealed in Romans.

We all *have* the confidence that God is our Father, that we are His children, and that we are saved. The apostle does not exhort the congregation, or even many in the congregation—the majority according to the Puritans—to undertake a quest after confidence, to try to obtain it, to work agonizingly for it for many years. But

he says we *have* the confidence of salvation.

The explanation of this assurance is that we have “received the Spirit of adoption.” This is the Spirit of God and of Christ (v. 9), who makes us know our adoption as God’s children in the cross of Jesus Christ.

The one who gives certainty, or assurance, is the Spirit.

That the Spirit is the one who gives assurance is further emphasized and explained in verse 16 of Romans 8: “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.” This may well be the most outstanding text on assurance in the whole Bible. There is a witness, a living Word, of the Spirit within us, “with our spirit,” that is, with our human spirit. This wonderful Word of the Spirit to us is, “You are a child of God.”

This is assurance!

When I hear this witness, I cannot doubt.

And it is the Spirit who witnesses and thus assures.

One other set of passages concerning the assuring Spirit must be mentioned. These are the passages that describe the work of the Spirit within us as His sealing of us (II Cor. 1:19-22; Eph. 1:13; 4:30).

On the basis of these and other passages of Scripture, the Reformed creeds repeatedly ascribe the believer’s assurance of salvation to the Holy Spirit. The Heidelberg Catechism is representative. Q. 1 has every Reformed believer confessing that “by His Holy Spirit He [Jesus Christ my faithful Savior] also assures me of eternal life.” Q. 21, as we have seen in earlier editorials, defines true faith as “an assured confidence.” The twenty-first answer immediately adds, “which the Holy Ghost works by the gospel in my heart.”

Qualified

If the regenerated believer who

is at the same time a doubting sinner is to have assurance of salvation, the Holy Spirit must work this assurance in him. I do not here intend to teach the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. But I point out what it is about the Holy Spirit that enables Him, and Him only, to assure us. First, the Holy Spirit is God. Only God can assure a human of salvation. Only God has the right to assure a human of salvation.

Who else knows with absolute certainty that someone is saved? Who else can work so powerfully in the heart of the elect sinner that all doubt and fear are overcome? Who

else has such authority—authority in the matter of salvation from sin and entrance into heaven—that a sinner could possibly dare to receive the assurance?

If another human or even the church must assure me, I will respond, “No doubt you mean well, but you do not know with certainty that I am saved; I cannot depend on your testimony, not with absolute certainty; you are not God.”

The Holy Spirit is God, the third person of the blessed Trinity. He is the God who knows all, because He determined all, particularly the number of the elect. As God, He is almighty, able powerfully to save us by assuring us, even as He is able to save us by regenerating us, by preserving us, and by raising our body from the grave. The testimony of God the Holy Spirit is authoritative and dependable. His assuring witness with our spirit is infallible. Upon His Word and witness we can depend.

Second, the Holy Spirit is now the Spirit of Jesus Christ. When Jesus ascended, God gave Him the Spirit to be His Spirit. On the day of Pentecost, Jesus gave the Spirit,

who had become His Spirit, to the church. The one who works assurance is the Spirit of Christ, as He is called in Romans 8:9. Only as the Spirit of Christ can He assure us. I dare say that the Holy Spirit simply as the third person of the Godhead could not assure us. It is Jesus who assures all of His own. Assurance, after all, is a work of salvation, and Jesus is the complete Savior. Jesus Christ assures us by the Spirit, who is His own Spirit.

Besides, the Spirit assures us by giving us Jesus Christ and by showing us Jesus Christ in all the riches of His redemption. There is no assurance for us sinners apart from Jesus Christ. And the Spirit can give and show us Christ because He is the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

Third, the Spirit is the Breath of God. “Breath” is the meaning of the Hebrew and Greek words for “Spirit” in the Bible. The Breath of God, who is now the Breath of Jesus Christ, penetrates into the deepest recesses of our heart, where none else can come, there to convince us that, although we are guilty, depraved sinners, God loves us, Christ died for us, and we are adopted children of God.

If it is true that the one who assures us of salvation is Jesus Christ, the risen, glorified man on God’s right hand, it is also true that Jesus does not assure us apart from the Spirit. Indeed, if Jesus were bodily in the room where I am typ-

ing this editorial and were to say to me, “David, you are one of my own,” without the inner work

of the Spirit in my heart I would not believe Him. I would not, and could not, be assured of my salvation.

Jesus taught this very truth about the necessity of the Spirit for the comfort of His disciples on the occasion of His departure from the world. “It is expedient for you that

The one who gives certainty, or assurance, is the Spirit.

The testimony of God the Holy Spirit is authoritative and dependable.

I go away." Why? "For if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you, but if I depart, I will send him unto you."

A fourth characteristic of the Spirit that qualifies Him to assure us of our salvation is that He is a person. He is a thinking, knowing, willing, feeling subject. He is not a mere force, or power, like electricity, or the wind, or love. This person comes into each elect child of God in such a way that the Spirit personally dwells in us. Acting as a person, He teaches us and overcomes our doubts, as only a person can do. He makes us certain of salvation by truth, logical reasoning, and argument. This is the idea of His bearing witness in Romans 8:16. A person bears witness with intelligible testimony and with convincing, conclusive argument based on truth.

I illustrate.

Convincing

Christ comes to me in the gospel. The Spirit makes me believe the gospel and trust in Christ for salvation. With the gospel and by faith, the Spirit assures me, "You are saved."

Then, perhaps, I begin to question my salvation: "But I am a wretched, vile, totally unworthy sinner." The Spirit responds, in my heart, "This is the only kind of sinner Jesus came

to save. Besides, the very fact that you confess your sinfulness is itself evidence that you are saved."

I may argue (for I am really desperately wicked, far worse than I know): "But my sorrow for sin is not nearly what it should be, and my love for God is pitifully weak." Responds the Spirit, patiently, in my heart, "This has nothing to do with your salvation. Salvation is of grace alone. Trust in Christ presented in the gospel, not in your sorrow for sin or your love for God. But as regards sorrow for sin and

love for God, the least sorrow is sign of salvation, as is the weakest love for God."

Finally, I might, foolishly and wickedly, raise my last-ditch objection: "But I am not sure my faith is genuine. Perhaps it is merely a historical faith, like the faith of the devils." "Oh," replies the Spirit, in my heart, "I will not let you get away with this clever lie! Stop scrutinizing your faith, inside yourself, and rather scrutinize the Christ outside yourself in the gospel of the Scriptures! Do not become a practical Arminian by grounding your salvation and its assurance upon your faith! There is no assurance in Arminianism! Be Reformed practically, as you are Reformed in confession! Ground your salvation, including the assurance of salvation, upon Christ Jesus in the doctrine of the gospel!"

"With regard to your faith, though, you do believe the gospel, don't you, not spurning it, but holding it for truth precious to you? You love and honor Jesus Christ, don't you, not saying, 'Cursed Jesus! Crucify Him!' but at the very least, 'I wish He were mine'?" You grieve, don't you, at

the thought that He and His salvation might not be yours? And you desire Him and His salvation. This is salvation. The desire for Christ and salvation *is* salvation.

All these spiritual activities are evidences of salvation, the marks of a child of God."

So witnesses the Spirit of Christ, convincingly.

Grieved

Because the Spirit is a person, if a believer is plagued with doubt, the cause likely is that he is grieving the Holy Spirit. (The widespread doubt due to the Puritan doctrine that faith is not assurance and that therefore most believers must expect to doubt much, if not all, of their life is another story. In

this case, it is the doctrine itself which does not so much grieve as anger the Spirit.) "Grieve not the holy Spirit of God," the apostle admonishes in Ephesians 4:30, adding, "whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." The Christian can cause the Spirit grief, which, of course, is true only of a person. And when the Christian grieves, or offends, the Spirit, the sealing work of the Spirit is affected. But sealing is this, that the Spirit makes the believer sure of his salvation, certain of God's love for him, confident that Christ and His redemptive work are his own.

Am I living in unconfessed sin?

Am I bitter against God because of disappointments and troubles in my life?

Do I harbor hatred in my heart for a brother or sister?

Am I living an unspiritual, careless life—hardly ever praying, hardly ever paying attention to the Word of God (even in church), hardly ever meditating on God and eternal things, hardly ever talking about the doctrines of the gospel (even in my family), hardly ever reading a theological book?

I must not be surprised then that I lack assurance. I am grieving the Spirit.

I cannot hide these otherwise secret things from Him. He is the all-knowing person in the depths of my heart and at the center of my life. I am an open book to Him.

He makes *me* feel the grief I cause Him by withholding His sealing of me in my consciousness.

I must stop grieving Him, by repenting of my sin and again yielding myself to Him to work in me the holiness of obedience to the law. And the Spirit will work this conversion exactly by afflicting me with the intolerable grief of doubt concerning the love of God and my salvation.

"Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation," I will then pray—*confidently*, "and uphold me with thy free spirit" (Ps. 51:12).

— DJE 

Do not become a practical Arminian by grounding your salvation and its assurance upon your faith!

What Is "Marriage?"

A petition drive was held recently in the state of Michigan that, if sufficient signatures were obtained, will require the issue of "gay marriages" to be placed on the November ballot. If the desired amendment passes, the Michigan constitution will define marriage as that only which is between a man and a woman. Though the state already has adopted a law declaring marriage to be only between two people of opposite sex, activist judges could conceivably declare this unconstitutional. The ground would be that the law denies "equal rights" to the homosexual individual.

Such a judgment was made in the state of Massachusetts when its supreme court declared (by a 3 to 4 decision) exactly that. *One vote* made the majority decision that now is the law of that state. A large number of the citizens of Michigan wish to avoid such happening in their state. In fact, a drive is now on to amend also the Constitution of the United States by likewise defining marriage.

Those who wish to legalize "gay marriages" insist that it is a question of "equal rights." The argument is appalling if carefully considered. Does one have "equal rights" to marry more than one of the same or opposite sex? Some say so. Does one have "equal rights" to a marriage involving young children? (The law would currently define such as "pedophiles.") Some say so.

Presumably these supposed "equal rights" would be limited or defined by amended Constitutions.

Still, will marriage be defined as the vows (and Scripture) express

it? At least in past years the vows declared this marriage to be "...in sickness and in health *till death do us part*." But it is already a "right" of individuals to obtain "no fault" divorces. One wonders if amendments such as those proposed will serve only to postpone the inevitable—each will do what is right in his own eyes.

Cal Thomas, writing in the *Loveland Reporter-Herald* on May 20, 2004, expressed it well:

Cultural tsunamis, like those that begin under oceans, are caused by something deep within. When high water hits the shore, it is the result of a subterranean earthquake. When the state of Massachusetts last Monday began offering marriage to people of the same sex, this "wave" was preceded by a seismic shift in the moral tectonic plates.

The Old Testament Book of Judges — part of a wisdom and truth long discarded by the "In Dow Jones we trust" crowd — said it best: "In those days there were no kings and everyone did what was right in his own eyes." Once that shift has taken place in sufficient numbers, once we become indifferent to immutable truths, the floodtide is not a matter of if but when.

Legally, the shift began in 1993 when the Hawaii Supreme Court ruled that barring same-sex couples from "marrying" might violate the state constitution's prohibition on sexual discrimination and must be justified by a compelling reason. Morally, the earthquake occurred much earlier.

The shift from personal responsibility, accountability, putting the greater good before personal pleasure, affluence and "feelings," and what once was known as "the fear of God" began following World War II. Consumption and pleasure replaced self-control and acting on behalf of the general welfare. Trying to

remind us of the benefits of restraint in 1979 (when it was already too late), the late Bishop Fulton J. Sheen delivered an address in Washington in which he asked how a football field is defined. "By its boundaries," he said. There are now no boundaries in America. Any rule is potentially viewed as oppressive, and any law — whether legal or moral — is up for debate, negotiation and overturning if it impedes a single individual from fulfilling his or her desire.

Who is to say the polygamist, Tom Green, is wrong when the boundaries have been removed? On what legal or moral basis will people who wish to marry more than one person, or a close relative, be denied their wish?

What is the future for "marriage" in the land? Does it make any difference whether or not there is "marriage" of the homosexual? Some advocate the philosophy, "Live and let live." There are, however, perceptive journalists who "tell it like it is." One such is Lori Borgman of the *Indianapolis Star*, as quoted in the *Grand Rapids Press*:

If you want to peer into the crystal ball to see what family life will be like in the event we redefine marriage, look to Scandinavia. The equivalent of same-sex marriage has been legal for more than a decade, and the verdict is in — same-sex marriage has eroded the already rusty link in the chain between marriage and family.

Marriage is passé in Norway, Denmark and Sweden. Marriage is so out of fashion that among those who do marry, some choose to keep it private to avoid embarrassment. Even more surprising, few homosexuals are taking advantage of same-sex unions. The heterosexual and homosexual marriage pool has shriveled so

much that marriage and divorce statistics are difficult to interpret.

Author Stanley Kurtz, who has been parsing the data coming from Scandinavia, says this much is crystal clear — any form is acceptable.

Marriage is no longer seen as a precursor to parenthood. When heterosexual marriage is no longer seen as the norm, and marriage and parenthood are no longer seen as going hand-in-hand, married parenthood becomes an oddity. Disassociating heterosexual marriage from parenting is like splitting up the salt and pepper, but that's exactly what has happened.

In Scandinavia, marriage has ceased being a big event in the lives of most young men and women. Many Nordic beauties have bid farewell to chunky issues of *Bride's* magazine, engagement rings and bridal showers. Marriage once signaled the hallmark of maturity in the journey of life. Today the mark of maturity in Scandinavia is having a baby....

(*The article concludes:*) Our own nation's link between marriage and family has been showing signs of rust for several decades. Less than half of our 20-somethings believe it is immoral to have a baby out of wedlock. We already lead the world in single parenthood and divorce. So is now the time to dismantle marriage even further? All quite possibly at the expense of our kids? One small step for man, one giant tumble for the children of tomorrow.

Marriage under the best of circumstances is a mystery. Oh, let's be honest. Some days it's an outright miracle.

You do not tinker with a social, legal and religious institution that has stood as a foundation to nations and cultures for centuries without risking serious repercussions.

Whichever path we choose, we will all — married or unmarried, heterosexual or homosexual — live out the consequences, as will our children, our grandchildren and their children.

In the words of Margaret Mead, "As the family goes, so goes the nation."

More ought to be said. It is not merely a question of what the nation, particularly its unbelievers, say is their definition of marriage. One can see behind all of the feverish activity the fiendish, devilish attempt to *destroy* marriage. Satan is not concerned with the destruction of the marriage of the ungodly merely. He is quite well satisfied with his success regarding those. He is rather intent in undermining if not destroying the whole concept of scriptural marriage within the churches. He has gone far in that direction already. Consider the decisions of the churches concerning divorce and remarriage; concerning the place of women within the home; concerning the marriage of those of the same sex. He would seek to advance this cause further. Ultimately it is a matter of the *destruction of the covenant* of God with His people. The covenant is continued in the line of spiritual descendants. But if marriage is finally destroyed, what happens to this "line of generations"? It is not only "as the family goes, so goes the nation," but "so goes the church."

One might be inclined to throw up his hands in despair. We can hardly stop the development of these sad activities. So...why not allow people to do as they see fit, while we maintain the demands of Scripture? It will not be that simple. The consequences of "gay marriage" will likely be persecution for the church soon. Columnist Kathleen Parker of Tribune Media Services, as quoted in the *Grand Rapids Press* of June 29, 2004, has pointed that out in an interesting and thought-provoking column. After presenting a brief analysis of the current state of affairs, she writes:

Whatever one may think of homosexual marriage in the abstract, the idea that a redefinition of marriage will have "no effect" is laughable, but not funny. After the nongay has faded, the issue is neither solely about love nor af-

firmation, but about serious legal consequences that all Americans may wish to consider before tuning out preachers or embracing gay activists.

For the sake of argument, let's stipulate that this is not personal — it's not about you, in other words — and acknowledge that heterosexuals have royally mangled marriage without any help from gays. Nevertheless, that fact doesn't mean that marriage is doomed or that expanding the definition of marriage to include homosexual unions will make marriage stronger. Or be harmless.

Of particular concern even for the nonreligious is the effect gay marriage could have on two of our founding principles — religious freedom and freedom of speech. Once the courts recognize gay marriage as equal in all ways to heterosexual marriage, then everyone else — including churches — has to recognize gay marriage as equal, too.

Any opposition will be deemed hateful by definition, and anyone who opposes gay marriage will be a hater. Given that many religions and denominations teach that homosexuality is a sin, church attendance alone could suggest you're homophobic. To the extent that one believes or preaches scripture, one is a bigot.

Hence some of the deep concern among legal professionals, as well as theologians. A secular world that ratifies homosexual marriage would provide a legal foundation that would open the floodgates to civil litigation against religious leaders, institutions and worshipers.

In such an environment, churches might be sued for declining to provide their sanctuaries for gay marriages, for example. Ministers could be sued for hate speech for giving a sermon on moral behavior. Churches that protest homosexual unions could face revocation of their tax exemption status.


The delicate balance between church and state, in other words, is teetering on a high ledge at this moment. It's ironic that those who oppose churches' in-

volvement in state concerns nonetheless have no compunction when it comes to the state dictating what churches can do. Even nonreligious folk should be concerned.

Either we believe in sepa-

ration of church and state or we don't, but you can't have it both ways....

Inevitably the church will be involved. In all likelihood, this

matter will result in grounds for silencing or persecuting the church. It was what Christ prophesied. We need not, then, be too surprised when it takes place. May God grant grace to be steadfast despite threats. 

When Thou Sittest in Thine House

Abraham Kuyper

Male and Female Created He Them

There are a few simple but extremely important facts in life that mock at all human self-willedness and scorn all arbitrariness. One of which is the great creation-fact that when God created man, He created them *man and woman*.

Think these three small words out of existence, and imagine that it would have pleased God to create man after the rule that applies to the angels, of whom Jesus said, *that they neither marry nor are given in marriage* — and all history, all life, yea, the fashion of the world would be irrerecognizable.

Imagine a world of men only, and everything that in barracks, offices, and in great throne gives offense by reason of the absence of what is gentle and tender would weigh on all of our human life with the heaviness of lead. The whole world would be nothing but one great barracks, one endless marketplace, one concourse that would never end.

Or imagine a world of women only, and by lack of firmness and strength, endless mobility, softness

and tenderness, and the never-ceasing hum of talking lip, making all life seem as a soft undulating sea, with the evening wind dancing and moving upon its waters.

In either case it would be a life without marriage, without family-homes, without brotherly fidelity and sisterly love, without ties of blood, without wooing and repelling, without change and antithesis, one monotonous human sameness.

Of course, we pass the inquiry by, how in that case the child of man would have been created. Why He who created Adam from the dust of the ground and formed Eve from a rib of Adam could not have been able to call us one by one into being without cooperation on the part of the woman and without the will of man.

Did not He so create the world of His angels and seraphim, the world of His cherubim?

With conception and birth, as now it proceeds by His ordinance, it is He and always shall be He who creates the soul of every one and "embroiders the body" from the still "unformed substance" (see Ps. 139).

Such a world without distinction of sex is indeed thinkable.

And it has its use, for one moment, to lose oneself in such a world of endless ennui, because nothing lifts us up to praise and thanksgiving more than this, that

in reality it is not so, but that God created us *man and woman*.



But that antithesis should then be taken in its *deep* sense, and not, as often is the case, exclusively in connection with the body.

It is by no means true that man and woman differ merely by longer or shorter hair, by more or less muscular strength, by greater angularity or more roundness of form.

It is not written: "God created, male and female, as to body"; but it reads: "God created man *in his own image*," and then follows immediately: "male and female created he them" (Gen. 1:27).

Thus the distinction between man and woman refers, even first of all, to the soul, the hidden inner being. And that the body differs is not least because the real distinction lies in the body, but also because in the body, if it shall be well, must lie the expression of our inner existence.

He who is not entirely weaned from knowledge of man and faces observes this again and again.

Though we may know nothing of a person, the outward appearance of one will inspire us with confidence and open our heart toward him, and the face of the other, as well as his bearing, will repel us and close our heart against him.

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Body and soul are strongly distinguished, and it is not true, as reported even among Christians, that our soul itself has formed its own body; and neither can it be said that there is no relation between the two.

God gives to every one his own body, and, apart from sin, every one would have just such a body as would suit his soul and be adapted to his inner existence.

Thus when it reads: "God created them man and woman," it is first of all our duty to think of the difference that marks the inner being. The inner disposition of the soul of a man differs from the inner disposition of the soul of a woman.

On either harp the same number of strings are strung; but they are differently arranged; they differ in length and weight; and they are differently played upon by the soul of a man than by the soul of a woman.



This antithesis runs now no longer true.

Here, too, sin has come in between the two and worked disharmony.

On the harp of the soul, of man and woman both, strings have been loosened, other have been covered with rust, and some have snapped.

And since with one this went this way and with the other that, the mutual relation at times is so strongly modified that you meet women who make you think of dressed up men, and men who have much in common with a disguised woman.

So sin always does.

It tears us out of our standing. It breaks equipoise. It disturbs harmony.

Hence all the discords that the ear continually catches and that presently pass your own lips.

There is no longer beautiful and pure accord.

It is all become chaos.

It is evident with children, for

when they are together you hear more than one girl say that she would rather have been a boy. When they grow up as boys and girls, not infrequently you find a girl who behaves as a boy. And among married women, it is not rare for a woman to think: I will be what my husband ought to be.

Altogether lack of reverence for divine ordinance.

And yet, even in this aberration the trace of the divine ordinance still shows itself.

For almost never do you find a boy who wants to be a girl, but the girl a boy; thus in their folly confirming the divine appointment that God created them, not woman and man, but man and woman.

Adam first, and only after him and from him, as his helpmeet, Eve.



For, of course, in that simple statement, "God created them male and female," there is order.

Where there are two, as long as these two stand side by side as equals, there is neither tie nor junction.

You can plant two poplar trees side by side, but you cannot put two animals together, and far less two people.

To create a tie and a connection between these two, order must be established over both. One must be first, and the other second. Two cannot simultaneously occupy the same place. One stands in the front, and therefore the other stands behind.

With two, one must always have the precedence.

No ship has two steering wheels or prows, but one prow and one rudder, and in the ship each has a place and calling of its own.

In the world of music there are *high* and *low* notes, and each as such has its own place and order.

In the world of colors, one color precedes the other.

An ordinance of God for His entire creation, which also applies

to man and woman, because God created them male and female. The man first, and *after that* the woman.

But here, too, sin has worked effects.

With the man, from his precedence to borrow a cause for despotism and to assume an authority to which he has no right, since it is stolen. And on the other hand with the woman, in that she takes no pleasure in the *second* place according to the rank of order, and is bound to take the first place, which God has withheld from her.

Especially in our days this tendency is strong.

Still to believe that God said to the woman: "Your husband shall rule over thee" (Gen. 3:6), our modern age turns into ridicule.



And in this respect also the harmony, originally ordered by God, and broken by us, shall once be restored, and when in eternity the redeemed shall enter upon that new state in which there shall no more be given or taken in marriage, from the two-sided disposed human heart, after its male and after its female fundamental type, God's honor shall be changed in purest accord.

Then the subjectivity of the woman to the man shall cease. For that subjectivity is not original in the creation, but follows from God's judgment after the fall into sin.

Then there shall merely remain precedence, but a precedence like that of Christ to His church, the less to seek self and the more to give self.

Mutual completion. Two halves of one whole that belong together. Fusion and solution of duality in higher harmony.



Of this the prelude can already on earth be enjoyed.

Not in the way of the chivalric gallantry of the Middle Ages, which in semblance elevated

woman, only to humiliate her the more deeply, but in the way of Christian wedlock and of the Christian family.

Then from the side of God there is authority over both.

Then both man and woman feel a deep sense of their own calling. Of *manly* calling the man, of *womanly* calling the woman.

Then both know their own place and have no desire to vacate it, neither will they allow them-


selves to be driven from it, and the life of faith itself tends to develop in man strength, fidelity, courage; in woman gentleness and tenderness.

So does God's ordinance provisionally revive again, and begins again to bless the partners in holy wedlock.

Not the married alone. The relation between brothers and sisters also becomes different and better. And in these circles, blessed of God, even the *general* intercourse

and relation of man and woman mutually become measurably again what they should be.

Then the foolish notions of the world lose flavor and taste. Healthy relationships according to the Scripture obtain power again and consecration.

And in the end, both become richer and happier, because they act together again after the ordinance of Him who created us *man* and *woman*. 

Islam (1)

A Little History: Jihad Without End(cont.)

"And the children of Issachar, which were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do; the heads of them were two hundred; and all their brethren were at their commandment."

I Chronicles 12: 32

...On this account I, or rather the Lord, beseech you as Christ's heralds to publish this everywhere and to persuade all people of whatever rank, foot-soldiers and knights, poor and rich, to carry aid promptly to those Christians and to destroy that vile race (Muslim, c.k.) from the lands of our friends. I say this to those who are present, it is meant also for those who are absent. Moreover, Christ commands it.¹

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(Previous article in this series can be found in the May 1, 2004 issue, p. 351.)

Anti-Jihad Jihad

This clarion call from Clermont, France by Pope Urban II in 1095 aroused Western Christendom to action. The thousands of people assembled to hear Pope Urban's speech responded with shouts of "God wills it! God wills it!" To fuel their enthusiasm further, the pope had red cloth cut up into strips, which were sewn together in the form of little crosses to be affixed to the sleeve of everyone who agreed to take part. Thus began the two hundred-year period of the "crusades."

While there were a number of motives for the crusades, high on the list were the more than four centuries of conquests during which Islam had taken control of two thirds of the old Christian world (see *SB*, May 1, 2004), and the pressure of Islamic jihad on Europe.

Four years after Pope Urban's call to arms, in April of 1099,

...the Crusader army marched on

to Jerusalem, and on June 7 besieged the city. The attack began July 14, 1099—the date destined to live in anti-Christian infamy centuries later — and the next day the Crusaders entered Jerusalem from all sides and slew its inhabitants, regardless of age or sex. The soldiers of the Church Militant, as it turned out, could not only outfight but also out-massacre their Mohammedan foes.²

However, ninety years later the Muslims retook Jerusalem under the able leadership of Salah-ed-Din (Saladin). This devastating loss to Christendom produced the Third Crusade, which succeeded in regaining Jerusalem in 1229. But by this time the strength and unity of

1. Bongars, *Gesta Dei per Francos*, 1, pp. 182 ff., trans. in Oliver J. Thatcher and Edgar Holmes McNeal, eds., *A Source Book for Medieval History* (New York: Scribners, 1905), 513-517.

2. Serge Trifkovic, *The Sword of the Prophet* (Boston, MA: Regina Orthodox Press, Inc., 2002), 99.

the crusading cause was waning, and in 1244 the city fell again to the Muslims, never to be regained, even though numerous other crusading armies were deployed for that purpose.

Jihad vs. Anti-Jihad Comparisons

It would be futile to attempt to justify the Western church's involvement in the crusades. It was, no doubt, wrong for the church to make territorial gains its goal, especially in light of the Lord's clear pronouncement that "His kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36). And it was in seeking territorial gains that the crusades were similar to Islamic jihad. Having said that, however, we must point out that an honest comparison of Muslim jihad with Christian jihad (crusades) does reveal a striking difference. While it is true that both claimed to be fighting holy wars, and both were often merciless in the process, the Scriptures *forbid* such activity by the church, while the Qur'an *demand*s it of its Islamic adherents.

Declare war upon those to whom the Scriptures were revealed but believe neither in God nor the Last Day, and who do not forbid that which God and His Apostles have forbidden, and who refuse to acknowledge the true religion until they pay the poll-tax without reservation and are totally subjugated. The Jews claim that Ezra is a son of God, and the Christians say, "The Messiah is the son of God." Those are their claims that do indeed resemble the sayings of the infidels of old. May God do battle with them!³

Serge Trifkovic explains this passage of the Qur'an as follows: "The Muslims are obliged to wage struggle against unbelievers and may contemplate tactical ceasefires, but never its complete abandonment short of the unbeliever's submission."⁴

Further, it should be noted that while the pope and various Prot-

estant groups have recognized the error of and apologized for the role of their spiritual forefathers in the crusades, "no major Muslim group has ever repudiated the doctrines of armed jihad."⁵

Post-Crusades Jihad

While defenders of Islam are quick to blame Christendom and her crusades for all the problems between Islam and the West, it should be noted that Islamic jihad both predated and postdated the crusades. In other words, the crusades had a beginning and an *end*, whereas Islamic jihad has been constant since its beginnings with Mohammad. The great Muslim historian Ibn Khaldun acknowledges this and even observes that this is one of Islam's advantages over the other religions, when he writes, "The other religious groups did not have a universal mission, and the holy war was not a religious duty to them, save only for the purpose of defense. It has come about that the person in charge of religious affairs in (other religious groups) is not concerned with power politics at all." He goes on to relate that Muslim leaders are concerned with power politics because Islam is "under *obligation* (emphasis, c.k.) to gain power over other nations."⁶

Therefore it is not surprising that Islamic jihad continued after the crusades. The crusades were, after all, only a temporary setback for the endless jihad of Islam. With the fall of Constantinople in 1453, Christian communities in the Balkans came under Muslim domination. The annual "blood levy" of Christian boys was but one price they had to pay:

On a fixed day, all the fathers were ordered to appear with their children in the public square. The recruiting agents chose the most sturdy and handsome children in the presence of a Muslim judge. Any father who shirked his duty to provide children was severely punished. This system was open

to all kinds of abuse. The recruiting agents often took more than the prescribed number of children and sold the "surplus" children back to their parents. Those unable to buy back their children had to accept their being sold into slavery....⁷

Only a spirited, persistent resistance by the Austrians during the Muslim siege of Vienna in 1529 prevented the exposure of the rest of Europe to similar abuses of Islamic jihad.

Although Islamic jihad was temporarily stymied in the West, it was making significant progress in the East. Already in the thirteenth century some rulers in Sumatra embraced Islam. From this beginning, widespread Islamic influence resulted throughout the Southeast Asian region. Java, the Malay Peninsula, and the Philippines proved to be fertile areas of expansion. At present, Indonesia is home to more Muslims than any other country in the world.

Unlikely as it might seem, Christian Europe and Islam would clash next in such faraway places as Africa and the Far East. The scramble for colonies by the European powers would provide the occasion:

Historians speak of the "Grab for Africa" and the "Scramble for China," with vast areas carved up between leading European powers. In fact, over half the world's population, including almost all of Africa and Asia, passed under varying degrees of control by Britain, France, Germany, Belgium, Holland, Italy, and new imperial powers such as Japan and the United States. The colonized peoples included many of the world's Muslims....

Thus Christian Europeans were threatened by Ottoman expansion (in the Balkans, c.k.) and incursions from the east. Meanwhile Muslims throughout much of the world were threatened by Christian European colonialism in India, Africa, and other locations. The complex legacy of rivalry and

enmity between Christianity and Islam was being fueled even further.⁸

For the most part, during this period of colonial expansion by the European powers, Islam was forced to give ground. This was not because Islam had given up on jihad, but rather because she was at this time no longer able to challenge the West. Islam's glory days were over. Stuck in the past she could no longer compete with the developing industrial West. That she had not given up on jihad can readily be seen, for example, by the first 9-11 type experience of the United States with Islam. This confrontation was initiated in the Mediterranean area by the "Barbary pirates." However, they weren't really pirates at all. Although they looted ships and bought and sold slaves, they saw themselves engaged in jihad and called themselves "mujahidin" (jihad warriors). In the fall of 1793, these Algerian mujahidin seized 11 U.S. merchant ships and enslaved more than 100 Americans. Presi-


dent Thomas Jefferson responded by urging the building of a navy to rescue American hostages and deter future attacks.

Lesser known is the example of a more modern Islamic jihad that took place in Turkey during the early 1920s. It involved the burning of the city of Smyrna and the massacre and scattering of its 300,000 Christian inhabitants. The conclusion of this dastardly affair and the shameful *non-role* on the part of the West is described by Serge Trifkovic:

The carnage culminated in the burning of Smyrna, which started on September 13, when the Turks put the Armenian quarter to torch, and the conflagration engulfed the city. The remaining inhabitants were trapped at the seafront, from which there was no escaping the flames on one side, or Turkish bayonets on the other.... English, American, Italian, and French ships were indeed anchored in Smyrna's harbor. Ordered to maintain neutrality, they would or could do nothing for the 200,000 desperate Christians on the quay...⁹

These and other examples of Islamic jihad demonstrate that though Islam has been unable to expand its borders by means of jihad in more recent centuries, jihad was still practiced — albeit often on its own non-Muslim citizens.

But all that was way back then, what about now? Surely Islamic jihad is a thing of the past! It's not possible that cultivated, modern man could think, much less act, in such an archaic, barbaric way in the twenty-first century, is it? *Think again!*

To be concluded. 

3. *Qur'an*, Surah 9:29-30.

4. Trifkovic, 104.

5. Robert Spencer, *Onward Muslim Soldiers* (Washington D.C.: Regnery Publishing, Inc., 2003), 10.

6. Spencer, 174.

7. Trifkovic, 115

8. Peter G. Riddell and Peter Cotterell, *Islam in Context* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003), 113-114.

9. Trifkovic, 125.

Marking the Bulwarks of Zion

Prof. Herman Hanko

John Wesley (2)

Introduction

John Wesley was born in the early part of the eighteenth century.* He was born and baptized in the Church of England or Anglican Church, in which his father was a rector in the parish of

Epworth. His life was a struggle to attain holiness, but the quest of holiness led him into paths of mysticism. While many different influences turned him towards mysticism, it was especially his reading of the medieval mystics that shaped his life. He came to love the medieval mystics, although he repudiated some of their teachings later in his career. Much of his life prior to becoming a traveling evangelist was spent in Oxford University, where he, his brother Charles, and others organized and maintained the Oxford Holy Club. The efforts

and struggles towards holiness that engaged the members brought them the mocking name "Methodists," because of the methodical and sometimes plodding path of good works in which they attempted to walk. These struggles culminated in the Aldersgate St. experience, where Wesley thought he was at last converted.

Wesley's Itinerant Ministry

Shortly after his conversion, Wesley began to preach more actively than he had before, even though it was sometime earlier that

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** In the July 2004 issue, p. 427, Wesley's birthdate was incorrectly given as 1723. The correct date is 1703.*

he had been ordained a deacon. That a deacon preached, while strange to us, was and is common practice in the Church of England, where deacons have a different role than in Reformed church polity.

Wesley's preaching differed markedly from that of the bishops, curates, and rectors in the Church of England. We must remember that the Church of England was the established church and that all the citizens of the commonwealth were technically members of, or at least under the supervision of, the church. When Wesley began his preaching, the religious and spiritual state of the church was very low. Wesley's father, Samuel, had learned that it was almost impossible to get any religion into the heads and hearts of the churlish, stubborn, unruly, violent, and uneducated members of his parish. That condition prevailed throughout most country parishes. While in the cities people tended to have more education (with the exception of the poor, whose life in the cities was still more cruel and debased than that of their fellow citizens in the country), those with education were worldly, cynically sophisticated, interested only in a religion that allowed them to be confirmed in the church, to be married in the church, to bring their children to the church to be baptized, and to be buried in a church graveyard.

The ministers were not much better. They received their livings from the holdings in the parishes, were more humanistic renaissance men than learned in the Scriptures, and were followers of Erasmus and other renaissance scholars rather than servants of Christ. A "good sermon" was usually considered to be a learned discourse on some aspect of ethics or philosophy with copious quotes from a wide variety of secular writings, preferably from ancient Greek and Roman authors.

Wesley was right that little holiness could be found anywhere in the church. Wesley was also right

that holiness, above all, was pleasing to God. It was his theology of holiness that was far removed from the teaching of the sacred Scriptures. It was a holiness that came from man's own efforts and not from the cross of Jesus Christ.

In sharp contrast with current preaching in the Church of England, Wesley began to pattern his preaching after the medieval mystics, especially those of the late fifteenth century who lived in the Rhine River valley. He stressed the necessity of the new birth and the endeavor to attain holiness. His preaching was not well received in the church, and an increasing number of churches were closed to him. One can well mark this closure of churches to Wesley as the beginning of the Methodist Movement.

At a loss as to what to do, he seized quickly on an invitation from George Whitefield to come to Bristol and work with him. Whitefield had developed into a preacher in his own right, but in the Western parts of England and in Wales. He had, however, never gone in the direction of mysticism and Arminianism, but had become a rather staunch Calvinist. He had adopted the method of preaching called "open-air preaching," by which ministers would preach to crowds assembled almost anywhere — in fields, streets, graveyards, and forests. Although somewhat skeptical at first, Wesley soon saw the effectiveness of this method, especially when church doors were closed to him. Wesley soon became England's most famous itinerant open-air evangelist.

It has been estimated that Wesley traveled nearly a quarter of a million miles (approximately ten times around the earth at the equator) and preached in excess of forty thousand times. His travel was usually on horseback, although sometimes afoot. It was travel over unimaginably rough roads, filled with holes and boulders, slippery and treacherous when wet and dusty when dry. He traveled in

all kinds of weather, during every season of the year, and usually was reading a book as his horse plodded along. He preached almost every day and most of the time two or three times a day.

Wesley's Relation to Women

Wesley's relation with women was strange. He was a close friend of Lady Huntingdon, a wealthy lady who was a supporter of the work of Wesley and Whitefield. He nearly married another woman, even traveling with her across the Irish Sea to Ireland. She was his close confidant and personal friend, and Wesley seemed intent on making her his wife. Through a combination of strange circumstances and another man who pressed his suit, the marriage never took place. When Wesley finally did marry, the marriage was most unhappy. He was seldom home, traveling throughout the whole of Great Britain on behalf of the gospel. His wife, embittered, and rightly so, by his constant absences, and rather sour by nature, tended to be an example of Solomon's proverb that a nagging woman is worse than a continual dripping of water.

Wesley's Relation to the Church

Wesley's relation to the Church of England was also a strange one. He remained all his life in the Church of England and always considered himself a faithful son of the church. When separation from the church was suggested, he refused to do so. The church was antagonistic to Wesley and closed its doors to his ministry, but never disciplined or censured him. It permitted him to conduct his ministry freely without official ecclesiastical censure.

This relationship becomes yet more strange when we consider that Wesley's movement, though it remained in the church during Wesley's lifetime, was a separate movement. It had its own chapels and its own organization. Wesley

ordained ministers to serve in the organized churches. In fact, contrary to the law of the Church of England, Wesley ordained women. No Methodist chapel would endure the presence of a Church of England prelate on its pulpit, and no Church of England parish would even consider having a Methodist minister on its pulpit. But both were part of the same denomination.

No one would deny that Wesley was busy. He never took vacation and considered any idle moment as a sin. He may have been the

busiest man in England. He traveled almost constantly, generally on horseback, preaching twice or thrice a day. He formed societies, opened chapels, examined and commissioned preachers, administered discipline, raised funds for schools, chapels, and charities, prescribed for the sick, superintended schools and orphanages, prepared commentaries and a vast amount of other religious literature, replied to attacks on Methodism, conducted controversies, and carried on a prodigious correspondence.

Wesley was no stranger to opposition and persecution. He and his preachers often had to face mobs and unruly crowds incited to violence by local prelates of the church and magistrates. Not only were the mobs noisy in efforts to disrupt the meetings, but sometimes things got so badly out of hand that injuries resulted from mob action. Wesley's ministry was particularly among the poor, the working class — miners, diggers, industrial workers — and the uneducated. These people were frequently stirred up to hatred by the authorities and considered violence against preachers a worthwhile diversion from the daily grind of their lives. But as the Methodist movement spread and grew, and as these itinerant preachers became more common, opposition de-

creased and finally died altogether.

Wesley's Relation to Others

Although Wesley had many helpers, fellow ministers, and close friends throughout England, four men especially are important to understand his work.

The first is John's brother Charles. Charles was, with John, a member of the Oxford Club. He continued to be close to his brother, one who preached himself, an assistant to John, and a traveling companion. He never attained the popularity of John, but is better known as the hymn writer of the Methodist movement. Some of his hymns, familiar to this day, gave vigor and spark to the movement, but also directed the thinking of the people in Arminian paths. There is no easier way to introduce heresy into the minds of people than through singing. Even of the Arminians of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries in the Netherlands it was said that they sang their way into the church.

The second man of note is Howell Harris, well known in Welsh Protestantism. He was an associate and close friend of Wesley, but a consistent Calvinist. Wesley's Arminianism was the direct opposite of the theology of Harris, and the two parted ways. Howell Harris is known as the father of the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Church.

The third man of note is George Whitefield. His own life would be worth recounting. He was a man of unusual oratorical abilities, to which field preaching was ideally suited. Whitefield traveled frequently to America; sparked, along with Jonathan Edwards, the New England revivals in the early eighteenth century, before this country fought its war for independence; and was acquainted with, if not a friend of, Benjamin Franklin. He, along with Howell Harris, is considered the father of the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Church. Whitefield too was a Calvinist, and

his Calvinism was the occasion for a temporary split with Wesley. The story is worth telling.

While Whitefield was in America, he embraced New England Calvinism. Wesley preached a sermon on *Free Grace*, in which he repudiated predestination as a blasphemous doctrine that made God worse than Satan. Whitefield urged him not to publish the sermon or repeat it, but Wesley did both. This led to separation between them. Wesley charged that not only did the Calvinists hold to predestination, both election and reprobation, but also to particular atonement instead of universal redemption. This to Wesley was anathema.

But it was not long before the two were friends again. Whitefield, however, was the compromiser. While never forsaking his Calvinism, already before his split with Wesley he had said, "Let us offer salvation freely to all," and be silent on election. Silence is also a denial of God's truth, whatever a man may hold in his mind. And so, both were soon on friendly terms and they remained such throughout their lives, although they traveled different paths. Wesley was a teacher of false doctrine, but Whitefield was the grand compromiser, willing to sell his convictions for the price of peace with a heretic.

The fourth man was Augustus Toplady, the author of the hymn *Rock of Ages*. He and Wesley were sworn enemies. The issue here too was Calvinism and especially the truth of election and reprobation. Lady Huntingdon already came to our notice (earlier in the article). Her sympathies tended to be with the Calvinists more than the Arminians. When six students sympathetic to Lady Huntingdon were expelled from the Methodist movement, Toplady entered the fray with a strong defense of God's sovereign and double predestination.

This so infuriated Wesley that


he wrote a slanderous and blasphemous caricature of predestination and published it over Toplady's name. Part of it read:

The sum of all is this: One in twenty (suppose) of mankind are elected; nineteen in twenty are

reprobated. The elect shall be saved, do what they will; the reprobate shall be damned, do what they can. Reader, believe this, or be damned. Witness my hand. Augustus Toplady.

The debate was furious and the

pamphlets many in number. But one thing the controversy brought out: Wesley was thoroughly Arminian and wanted nothing of the doctrines of grace.

We will examine his doctrine a bit more in the next article. 

Go Ye Into All the World

Rev. Jason Kortering

Evangelism in the Established Church (1)

Orientation

Most, if not all, of our congregations have an "Evangelism Committee" or have what is sometimes called a "Church Extension Committee." The general purpose of such a committee is to put forth effort to get the message of the gospel, as proclaimed in the local church and in our churches, to those who are without. The scope of their labors usually is not limited by geographic proximity to the local congregation; rather, most of them develop contacts anywhere in the world. The reason for this is obvious: whenever efforts are put forth to get the word out into the world, God is sovereign in its distribution. An interested person who lives next door to the church building may send a copy of some literature to a member of their family who lives in Brazil, and one never knows where all of this may lead. Truth is, that most of the effort of our evangelism committees is concentrated in our own local area. This is good and proper, for the purpose of all such effort is to be obedient to the mission mandate

to begin at Jerusalem and then go unto the uttermost parts of the world. We begin our outreach with those who are closest to us and then extend the contact to others.

These committees have to be commended for their efforts to diversify the approach. Let me just list a few of those efforts. They publish and distribute literature; some of them even develop a rather extensive mailing list. Closely connected to this is a tape ministry. They prepare and distribute both audio and video copies of messages on various subjects. In some instances, this has led to the broadcast of the worship service over both radio and cable television. Others make use of our denominational broadcast and sponsor that in the local area. Usually, the committees sponsor some form of seminar or lecture series on a current subject of interest and advertise that so others can attend. On a more intimate level, some committees become involved in Bible Studies that are geared to a specific audience, it may be college students or anyone interested in the study of a certain subject. Another method used is that of "Newspaper Evangelism," in which a certain brief message is published in the local paper with a view to the

general public reading it and becoming acquainted with some important aspect of truth. Usually, at various times, effort is put forth to contact the neighbors. This can be done through mailings or by personal distribution as the members go door to door. The emphasis here is to acquaint the neighbors with the gospel or with some aspect of its message, which may include a special invitation to come and worship or to attend some specific event. Finally, there are more specific ministries to meet special needs that may include prison ministries, hospital visitations, and such like. If my memory is correct, I think that some of our pastors have in the past engaged in "street preaching." That may be more European or Asian, so I am sure many of our foreign readers are familiar with this ministry as well.

The effectiveness of all such outreach efforts is connected with personal contact. This is true because the goal of outreach is to communicate the gospel. The chief means to that end is the preaching of the gospel. The real encounter of all ministries is that one may come to hear the voice of our Lord Jesus Christ Himself. It stands to reason, then, that the efforts of out-

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reach by the Evangelism Committee must be personal. Yes, God may use a piece of literature sent through the mail, but nothing can compare to that same piece of literature given by one person to another. It allows for more opportunity not only to talk, but far more importantly, to convey the love of Christ, which is what the gospel is all about. Methods that involve face-to-face contact are far more effective for this same reason. God uses human instrumentality to convey to others the sincerity of the message. Urgency, conviction, passion, and love are demonstrated in personal contact.

The conclusion that I draw from this is twofold. The first is that our membership must be personally involved in the efforts of the Church Extension Committee for those efforts to be effective. Every one of us as members of the congregation must know what our committee is doing and we must ask ourselves, how can I do my part to make that effort more effective. A committee trying to do outreach without the involvement of the members is greatly handicapped. Secondly, the motivation to do this rests in the fundamental calling of every member to be burdened with the spiritual welfare of his neighbor. The heartbeat of all evangelism in the local church is the living testimony of a godly walk by the members and their eagerness to share the gospel with those who cross their pathway. The great motivation for effective evangelism in the local church is a heart that truly loves God and loves the neighbor for God's sake. If we truly love God, the goal of evangelism is not self, not even the neighbor, but is God and His glory through the gathering and strengthening of His precious people.

The purpose of this short series of articles is to motivate each member of the local church to be personally active in evangelism and to give the work of the Evan-

gelism Committee the spiritual impetus it needs.

One approach I like to take is to encourage you to read some of the challenging literature on this subject. More than likely we need help if we are to reach out personally to our neighbor. Interestingly, we have very few Protestant Reformed publications from which we can quote. Precious little has been written on the subject of missions and local evangelism. Our Evangelism Committees have observed that we have very little literature specifically written for non-Christians. We do not have booklets that guide the committees in various methods of personal outreach. We cannot pick up a Protestant Reformed publication that helps our members share their personal faith with a non-Christian. I am not being critical here, nor am I belittling our past efforts, for I understand very well our history and the focus of our attention.

We must not reason, however, that since we did not have need for such material in the past, we do not need it today. Certainly, I trust our discerning readers will understand that the great blessing of God upon our churches and their history is that *now* is the time for outreach. We have been guided by God's providential history to set forth clearly the Reformed faith, especially as it relates to the gospel and its preaching. In addition to that, we have been tested in our sincerity of that faith by a massive split in our churches. God has enabled us to recover; we have gone from strength to strength, as is evidenced in the practical demonstration of love for our children in covenant instruction. These events have taken the lion share of our efforts and they have been

greatly blessed by God, so that now we stand strong in the truth of the gospel and the covenant and in the practical working out of these convictions in our daily life. Now is the time that we can truly say, from this foundation of strength, God commands us to reach out and share this with others.

I am convinced there is no church that has the gospel of the "full counsel of God" as we do. We have consistently worked out the practical implications of the antithesis in our daily life. God does not want us to keep this simply for ourselves; it is this glorious truth that God has committed to us to share with others, even at this late date in history. As we reach outside our churches we will ac-

complish two things: we will witness to non-Christians and bring the gospel to them, and we will encourage fellow saints outside our churches. Probably more than at any other time in history our fellow saints need encouragement to stand for the truth, even unto death. We need to show God's love to our neighbors, whether they are here in America or young Christians in remote countries throughout the world. True unity and love is critical in these last days, and we as Christians must put forth effort to do our part.

Besides this, there is one more reason why it is necessary that we emphasize personal contact with our neighbor. Our social culture has changed. We have shifted from a predominantly agricultural society to a highly urbanized one through economic changes. As a result of this, personal contact with our neighbors has diminished. I remember the day when members of the rural community died, the local church bell would toll the number of his/her years. It was a moving tribute to everyone who

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lived in the town and adjacent country. Now we cannot even have a procession to the cemetery because drivers are so rude they interrupt the cars of the procession. With automatic garage door openers we come and go without even seeing our neighbors. Emphasis on privacy laws make us afraid how much we can even talk about our faith with others when we do have a face-to-face chat. If there was ever a time when we needed encouragement and instruction how to share our faith with our neighbors it is now. That is why we need to face this as we have not done before.

Having said this, I must admit that it is not easy to recommend what books can be helpful. If our attitude is that we have to be completely in agreement with a book or it cannot be read or used, we are in desperate straits, for there are precious few such books on outreach. I like to believe that our readers are mature enough to read with discernment, as we must with almost all books. The ultimate test of any writing must always be the Word of God. Preferred writers are those who set forth their ideas from a Reformed perspective. Even then, we have to be discerning. Others may be able to give us suggestions, especially in some of the practical ways of interacting with non-Christian neighbors. They too must be tested by the Word of God.

One book that I found encouraging is entitled *Get Out & Get Rid of Dilemmas*, by G. Vandoornen. This book is out of print and can be found only in libraries. Since it was written in 1972, when immigrants from the Netherlands had settled in Canada, the author addresses the attitude of the people in which they express their fear to share the gospel with others. Much of this is evident in our churches today as well. Let me quote from the introduction:

The general single topic of the following pages will be to un-

derline the necessity for the Church of Jesus Christ to "become an open Church."

"Being" and "becoming" always go together in the Scriptures. Paul, addressing the "saints" in his letters, does not get tired of pointing out that they have to become, more and more, in daily conversation and sanctification, what they already are "in Jesus Christ."

Being the true Church must never mean that we have attained it and now can relax. When the Heidelberg Catechism speaks (L.D. 44) of "a small beginning of the new obedience," this should not only be understood as applying to the individual believer, but also to the community and fellowship of the believers.

By the expression, "an open Church" we do not only stress that according to our nature, the Church of Jesus Christ welcomes every one who desires to join her in true faith but also that she looks around, opens her arms, "goes out" to bring in the lost, in one word, the Church bears the image of her Savior, Jesus Christ."

Will Metzger wrote *Tell the Truth, The Whole Gospel to the Whole Person, by Whole People*. This one is still in print and published by InterVarsity Fellowship. It is the one I used when we had a special class on outreach when I pastored our Grandville PRC. It has Reformed emphases, contrasts the man-centered gospel with the God-centered one. It is not simply a book on principles, but it has many practical suggestions on how to do outreach in the local church and in your personal life.

Going and Growing is a book written by Dick and Thea VanHalsema when they were involved in Reformed Bible College. They brought the Baker Mission Lecture series to that school in 1990 and these are summaries of their messages. I don't know if it is available today. Let me quote from this book,

In the spring of 1983, Robertson McQuilkin, president of

Columbia Bible College, visited RBC in Grand Rapids, Michigan to present the twelfth annual series of Baker Mission Lectures.

From a lifelong involvement in missions—including twelve years of missionary service in Japan—President McQuilkin asked why Christ's Great Commission captures the enthusiasm and enlists the service of so few Christians.

The speaker stated his own conclusions about why mission laborers are in such short supply. McQuilkin ventured to say that, in general, Christians have "heart trouble" (Christians do not love, do not really care about those who are outside of Christ). We have "eye trouble" (we do not see the plentiful harvest on the one hand and the shortage of workers on the other). We have "head trouble" (that something is wrong with our thinking processes, our brains, when we spend most of our time in theological speculation instead of engaging in witness and evangelization). Again, the guest speaker charged that Christians are prone to have "knee trouble" (for many, prayer is a neglected means of grace) and "ear trouble" (God calls, but we do not listen or obey).

President McQuilkin's main point was that many Christians have exchanged the "Great Commission" for the "Great Omission."

I am limited by space, but we must mention a couple of the classics: *God-Centered Evangelism*, by R. B. Kuiper; *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God*, by J. I. Packer. Even though Charles Haddon Spurgeon was addressing pastors when he gave the lectures contained in *The Soul Winner*, and though he comes from a believers' baptism tradition, he still inspires me as only Spurgeon can. He was a Calvinist who had a burden for lost souls. I am sure he will inspire you as well.

There are other writings. Perhaps we can quote and refer to them as we go along. ☺

The Catholicity of the Church

It is easy to find references that explicitly say that there is one church, and that this church is holy, but the word "catholic" is not found in Scripture. The term means "universal in extent" or "throughout the whole," and is used to describe the church as a body of believers that is universal in extent, gathered throughout the whole human race out of all the nations of the world. The term is found in the titles that have been given to the epistles of James, Peter, John, and Jude. These are often referred to as the "catholic epistles," because they were addressed, in the first instance, not to any particular church, but to all Christians.

The catholicity of the church is inseparably related to the oneness of the church and the holiness of the church. If the church is catholic, or universal, then there can be only one church. And if this one church has been gathered out of this world, so that she is separated from the world and consecrated to God, then this one universal church is also holy.

For centuries the Romish church has claimed exclusive rights to the name "catholic." Our children become aware of this at a very early age, and often ask us why it is that we say we believe "a holy catholic church" even though we are not "Catholic." It is important that we understand not only how the Romish church wrongly applies this name to herself, but also what we mean when we confess this

truth, and how we show in our life that we truly believe this truth in our heart.

The Romish Claim to Catholicity

The Romish church applies the truth of the catholicity of the church to her visible organization. She claims that she alone can be referred to as the catholic church, because she is the only instituted church that is visibly spread over the whole earth, and that has existed, so she claims, from the days of the apostles. All other instituted churches are seen by her to be sects that have broken away from the one catholic church.

Over against this, Reformed churches have argued that when the church is said to be catholic, this is referring to her especially as the body of all the elect believers. It is not saying that there is one church (or federation of churches) on this earth that has a visible presence in each nation of this world. Rather, it is referring especially to the universal body of elect believers, and is saying about this body that she has been gathered throughout history, not just from Pentecost to the present, and that she has been gathered not just out of one nation, or out of a few nations, but out of all the nations of the world.

The truth of the catholicity of the church, though referring to the church as the universal body of believers, does have an application to the church as institute. A true instituted church of Christ strives to manifest the catholicity of the church on this earth as much as possible. She does so by rejecting the notion of many today that a true church can remain independent of other churches. A church

that rightly confesses the catholicity of the church freely joins herself to other true churches and forms a federation with them, striving also to develop sister-church relations with every faithful instituted church that she can find upon this earth.

Who Belongs to the Catholic Church

According to the Catechism of the Roman Catholic Church, paragraphs 836 and 838, the following belong to the "Catholic Church."

836. "All men are called to this catholic unity of the People of God.... And to it, in different ways, belong or are ordered: the catholic faithful, others who believe in Christ, and finally all mankind, called by God's grace to salvation."

838. "The Church knows that she is joined in many ways to the baptized who are honored by the name of Christian, but do not profess the Catholic faith in its entirety or have not preserved unity or communion under the successor of Peter." Those who "believe in Christ and have been properly baptized are put in a certain, although imperfect, communion with the Catholic Church."

Thus we see how the Romish church tries to lure Protestants toward her, by teaching that all believers really already are in communion with her, the "Catholic Church."

She goes on to include the Muslims in the group of those who worship the true God:

841. "The plan of salvation also includes those who acknowledge the Creator, in the first place

amongst whom are the Muslims; these profess to hold to the faith of Abraham, and together with us they adore the one, merciful God, mankind's judge on the last day."

What the Romish church calls the Catholic Church is really the antichristian church. And the article quoted above shows how the antichristian church seeks to ally herself not only with all who externally confess Christ, but even with Muslims.

Over against this, we confess that the catholic church consists only of true believers. Contrary to their claims, we are not in any communion with the Romish church or with other religious groups who blatantly deny the truth of Scripture. The true catholic church is built upon Jesus Christ, who is the Truth, and she consists of those who believe this Truth. In a day when the apostatizing churches all around us are uniting, and are referring to this unholy union as a manifestation of the unity and catholicity of the church, we must continue to maintain that the unity of the real catholic church will always be, and will only be, a union in the Truth, as that Truth is revealed in and by Christ Jesus.

The Salvation of the Human Race

When the church is gathered out of the nations, the result is that all the nations are saved. When the church is gathered out of the whole human race, this means that the whole human race is saved. This is due to the organic nature of the nations and of the human race. The elect in each nation are the living core of each nation. When these elect are saved, that nation is saved. The elect in the human race are the new human race under Jesus Christ, the Head. When the elect are saved, it is very really the case that the human race is saved.

This is the meaning of all the passages that speak of all nations coming to Jesus Christ and being

blessed in Him. Psalm 86:9 is an example of such a passage, which contains the promise that "All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord; and shall glorify thy name." Passages such as this one (and there are many such passages) are not saying that there will come a future day when the majority of those in each nation will willingly serve Christ. Rather, these passages are teaching that if at the end of this age one were to look back over the entire history of this world, and consider the history of any particular nation, there will have been at least some period of time in which elect believers were being gathered out of that nation, and that those elect individuals together actually constitute the nation. In other words, a nation comes to Christ when the elect in that nation come to Christ.

This is also the explanation for the passages in Scripture that speak of Christ saving the world. John the Baptist pointed to Christ and said, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). Now when Scripture says that Christ saves the world, it means that He saves not only human beings, but also the entire creation. But right now we are considering only what this means with regard to the saving of human beings. When God says that Christ saves the world, this means that He saves the entire human race. It is true that Christ died only for His elect sheep (John 10:15), but when He saves His sheep He saves the world. This is because the elect individuals very really constitute the new human race with Christ as the Head.

The saving of the human race is illustrated in what happened at the flood in the days of Noah. Through the judgment of the flood the human race was saved, even though the majority of the people on the earth perished in the waters. When God saved Noah and his family, He saved the human race.

No Racism in the Catholic Church

One who truly believes the catholicity of the church firmly rejects all racism. He speaks against it when he sees it, and he despises it when he sees it within himself. There is no earthly blood line that is more holy than another. By nature we are all depraved, are dead in sin, and can do nothing but sin. It is only and entirely by God's grace that we have been saved. This work of grace unites us with our brothers and sisters from the different nations of the world in a unity that transcends differences in nationality and race. All believers are citizens of a new nation, and members of the new human race. In this body there is absolutely no place for racism of any kind.


There are many who have tried to defend their racist thoughts and statements by referring to Scripture. Reference has often been made to the cursing of Canaan, where God through Noah said that Canaan would be "a servant of servants." Since the Africans are often said to be descendants of Ham, Canaan's father, some have used this passage to defend being racist against the Africans. But this curse is not saying that all the descendants of Ham or all the descendants of Canaan, head for head, were cursed to everlasting destruction. That Shem and Japheth were blessed did not mean that every one of their blood descendants were blessed. Nor did the fact that Canaan was cursed mean that every blood descendant of Canaan was cursed. Uriah, whom David killed, was a Hittite, a descendant of Canaan, and he showed himself to be a godly man, who served as one of David's mighty men.

God means what He says when He declares that He will save all nations. There are elect people of God, our brothers and sisters in Christ, in all the different nations of the world. We show we believe this when we are zealous, very zealous, in the work of missions. We show we believe this by call-

ing out to God to raise up more men to preach the gospel, not only in our own instituted churches where we have vacancies, but also on the mission field.

This is the commission that our

Lord and Savior has given to us. Out of a love for God and for the catholic church of Christ, we must willingly and cheerfully support this work, so that the eyes of our brothers and sisters may be enlight-

ened by the gospel of grace, and so that we might manifest on this earth, as much as possible, the unity, the holiness, and the catholicity of the church of our Lord Jesus Christ. 

Book Reviews



Measuring the Music: Another Look at the Contemporary Christian Music Debate, by John Makujina. Willow Street, PA: Old Paths Publications, repr. 2002. 369 pages. \$16.99 (paper). [Reviewed by the editor.]

Measuring the Music is an important examination and convincing condemnation of "contemporary Christian music."

Reformed young people especially need to be warned. But so do their parents, if they are to warn their children. So also do the churches, if they are to keep this corruption out of the lives of their young members and, by this evil day, out of their official, or semi-official, gatherings. ■

Justification, by Francis Turretin. Tr. George Musgrave Giger. Ed. James T. Dennison, Jr. Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P&R, 2004. Pp. xxvi + 115. \$9.99 (paper). [Reviewed by the editor.]

This one hundred-page excerpt from Francis Turretin's work of Reformed theology is timely. Unbelievably, Reformed and Presbyterian churches are being troubled by brazen attack on the truth of justification. To a large extent, the ministers and theologians either support the heretics or fail to give clear, sharp instruction on justification that will expose the heresy and help the troubled members of the congregations.

Francis Turretin, seventeenth century Swiss theologian and professor of theology at Calvin's Academy in Geneva, gave clear, thorough, polemical instruction on the fundamental truth of justification.

Those directly involved in the life-and-death struggle with the

current false gospel of justification by faith and the works of faith should read this short work. All Reformed Christians will profit from it. In a few places, the going gets heavy, but for the most part the layman will have no trouble understanding the language and following the arguments. The instruction is biblical.

The importance of the sound doctrine of justification, Turretin indicated at the outset.

Justification ... must be handled with the greater care and accuracy as this saving doctrine is of the greatest importance in religion. It is called by Luther "the article of a standing and a falling church." By other Christians, it is termed the characteristic and basis of Christianity—not without reason—the principal rampart of the Christian religion. This being adulterated or subverted, it is impossible to retain purity of doctrine in other places. Hence Satan in every way has endeavored to corrupt this doctrine in all ages, as has been done especially in the papacy (p. 1).

R.C. Sproul has a hard-hitting introduction to the book. He affirms the fundamental importance of justification by faith alone to the gospel as indicated in Luther's assessment, "the article of a standing and a falling church."

Without this doctrine the church falls; she collapses into ruin. She ceases to be a true church. Though every other article of historic Christian faith remains intact—if this one (*sola fide* [by faith alone]) is lost, the church is lost with it (p. vii).

One of the "serious questions" raised today regarding the Reformation's doctrine of justification is that which Norman Shepherd taught for years at Westminster Theological Seminary.

The controversy at Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia over theologian Norman Shepherd's teaching regarding justification remains unresolved. The number of Shepherd's followers has increased over the years since he was dismissed from Westminster (p. xiii).

The next-to-the-last chapter considers the question whether there is an eternal justification.

The last chapter explains the justification that takes place at the final judgment. ■

Why I Left the Contemporary Christian Music Movement: Confessions of a Former Worship Leader, by Dan Lucarini. Webster, MY: Evangelical Press, 2004. 141 pages. No price given (paper). [Reviewed by Prof. Robert D. Decker.]

Two matters by way of introduction to this review are in order: 1) This is a must read for anyone who is attracted to the Contemporary Christian Music Movement (CCM) and for anyone looking for reasons why the church must have nothing to do with this form of music in her worship and in her life. 2) The author was not only a worship leader for several evangelical churches, but was also a rock music performer, arranger, and composer.

The author contends convincingly that CCM is a "...man-made phenomenon...because it lacks a strong biblical foundation and ig-

nore God's instructions for acceptable worship" (p. 18). Further, CCM is founded on the principle that God will accept it. It is found in churches that tell people, "come as you are and we will accept you." What these churches mean is, "come as you are and remain as you are."

This, the author rightly argues, is not what God says to people. God commands the church to command people to repent from their sins. And repentance involves a radical turning away from our sins and turning to the service of God! We as Christians must flee worldliness and seek holiness.

The author's definition of Jesus' word in John 4:24, "in spirit and in


truth," is simplistic, but on the "right track." Lucarini interprets Jesus' word as being this: "worship is homage from the heart and regulated by God's Word" (pp. 54-55).

Speaking from his own experience as one having been deeply involved in what he calls "the rock music lifestyle" (p. 29), Lucarini insists that CCM has its roots (especially as regards its beat and rhythm) in rock and roll. Because of this, CCM, as is true of rock and roll, appeals to our old fleshly natures of sin, particularly sexual immorality.

It is also a fact that CCM splits congregations. CCM is not a matter of personal preference and taste. It is sinful because of its

roots and because it imitates worldly music and tempts brothers and sisters to stumble. Music in God's world and church is not neutral. Music style and content, beat and rhythm, have a moral dimension. And rock is associated with sensual lusts, drugs, and rebellion against authority.

For these reasons especially, Dan Lucarini left the CCM movement. May God give us the grace to have nothing to do with it in our personal lives and in our churches.

The major weakness (there were also a number of annoying typographical errors) is that the book is written from an Arminian perspective. 

News From Our Churches

Mr. Benjamin Wigger

Young People's Activities

A hearty thanks goes out to all those who were involved in the planning and work connected with this year's Young People's Convention. This year's convention was organized by the young people and congregation of the Southwest PRC in Grandville, MI and was held at Covenant Hills Camp in Otisville, MI from July 12 - 16. This year's Convention was very well organized, no small task for all the many hands and hearts, young and old, at Southwest. The young people gave a very good testimony of their faith and walk, the unanimous testimony of the campground leaders, as well as the chaps. Southwest has received untold reports of the appreciation of our young people for the benefits of the convention. The conduct of our young people was exemplary. The Discipline Committee did not meet even once in the course of the week. All three speeches (by the Revs. R. Cammenga, R. Kleyn, and

W. Langerak) were excellent, and the conventioners left at the end of the week having "Drawn Near to God" in a very positive way. Discussion groups were characterized by good participation, interest, and maturity. If you think we are exaggerating, just find someone in your congregation, either a conventioneer or chap, and we think you will find that they had a rewarding time. Thanks be to God for the young people He has given to us. May God's name have been honored and our young people spiritually enriched at this year's convention.

Thirty-six teenagers and young adults from the Bethel PRC in Roselle, IL, as well as our congregations in South Holland, IL; Holland, MI; Hope in Grand Rapids, MI; Peace in IL; Randolph in WI; and the Pittsburgh Mission enjoyed a wonderful week canoeing in the Boundary Waters in Minnesota July 19-24. This was the fourth trip planned by the Young People's Group of Bethel. Once again, everyone attending had an excellent opportunity for growth in grace and in learning to appreciate

deeply our Father's creation and the unity of the body of Christ.

This summer, before the Young People's Convention, the young people of the Loveland, CO PRC began a week-long trip to West Michigan, Southwest PRC, and the convention by singing their way across the country. They gave a choir concert in their home church in Loveland and then traveled to Iowa, where they gave a concert at the Hull, Iowa PRC on July 7, with young people from the Hull and Doon congregations joining them. Then it was on to the Chicago, IL area, where they repeated their concert on July 9 with the young people from Peace, Bethel, and South Holland. Then on to Grand Rapids, MI and the Pre-Convention Singspiration at Fair Haven Ministries in Jenison, MI, where the Loveland young people, along with any other young people from Iowa and Illinois, gave a special number.

All young people from the Faith PRC in Jenison, MI were asked to meet in their Fellowship Room on August 1 for an informational meeting about the 2005

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PRYP Convention, which, as you might have guessed by now, will be hosted by Faith next summer, the Lord willing.

Congregation Activities

Members of the First PRC in Holland, MI have been meeting together this summer for a Summer Book Club. This summer season they have been discussing the little book by John Calvin entitled *Golden Booklet of the True Christian Life*. One of their recent meetings looked at chapter 3 — "Patience in Cross Bearing."

The congregation of the Doon, Iowa PRC gathered on July 9 for their annual church picnic, which this year also included a farewell program for their pastor, Rev. R. Smit, his wife, Tricia, and their five children. Sunday, June 27, Rev. Smit preached his farewell sermon at Doon, based on II Corinthians 13, entitled, "Finally, Brethren, Farewell."

Rev. Smit was installed as the fourth pastor of the Immanuel PRC in Lacombe, Alberta, Canada on Sunday, July 18, at the afternoon service, by Rev. M. Dick. He preached his first sermon as

Immanuel's pastor the following Lord's Day, July 25, from II Kings 2:9-15, under the theme "Taking Up the Mantle." The following Wednesday there was a welcome dinner for the Smits held in the Bethel CRC Fellowship Hall.

Evangelism Activities

The Evangelism Society of Southwest PRC in Grandville, MI invited their community to this year's Summer Seminar, "Marriage — God's Institution," on three Wednesdays in July and August. Subjects covered were, "The Bible's Teaching on Marriage," "Marriage and the Culture of Divorce," and "Marriage and Homosexual Union." The speakers were scheduled to be Rev. R. Cammenga, Rev. K. Koole, and Rev. C. Terpstra.

Mission Activities

Rev. Angus and Mary Stewart planned to travel to South Wales Friday, August 6, the Lord willing. Rev. Stewart planned on giving a lecture on "Does God Desire to Save the Reprobate?"

Rev. A. denHartog spent Sunday, July 25 in the Hope PRC in Redlands, CA. Besides leading the worship services he also gave a

presentation on the work in Myanmar and Singapore.

Minister Activities


In our sister churches in Singapore, Rev. Cheah Fook Meng declined a recent call to serve as pastor of the Chinese ministry of the First ERCS.

Rev. G. Eriks declined the call he received from the Doon, Iowa PRC. On August 2, Doon extended a call to Rev. W. Bruinsma to serve as their next pastor. With Rev. Bruinsma on that trio were the Revs. C. Haak and J. Slopsema.

The Georgetown PRC in Hudsonville, MI extended a call to Rev. C. Haak to become their next pastor.

Rev. J. Laning declined the call he was considering to serve as the next pastor of First PRC in Edmonton, AB, Canada.

From a trio of the Revs. W. Bruinsma, G. Eriks, and D. Kleyn, the congregation of Faith PRC in Jenison, MI extended a call to Rev. Eriks to serve as their next pastor.

On Sunday evening, August 29, our Hudsonville, MI PRC will call a pastor from a trio made up of Rev. A. Brummel, Rev. A. denHartog, and Rev. S. Key. 

Announcements

World and Life View Conference

September 24 & 25, 2004 in Hull, IA

Sponsored by the Christian Fellowship Society of Hull PRC

Friday, September 24 at 7:30 P.M.

Lecture

at the chapel in Dordt College
Sioux Center, IA

Speaker: **Prof. David Engelsma**
"Reformed Worldview of Particular Grace"

EVERYONE IS WELCOME!
Please plan to attend. If you need
lodging, contact Kathy Brummel at
kbrummel@hickorytech.net or
712-439-1114.

Saturday, September 25

Events held at Hull PRC

9:30 A.M.

Lecture by Prof. David Engelsma
"Flawed & Fatal Worldview of
Common Grace"

Speech by Prof. Syd Hielema,
Professor of theology at Dordt College,
giving Dordt's position on their world
and life view.

Lunch—Provided by the
Hull Christian Fellowship Society.

Symposium/Debate

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On July 24, 2004 our parents,
ALVIN and BRENDA BYLSMA,
celebrated their 30th wedding anniversary.

We give thanks to our heavenly Father for the years they have had together. We are also thankful for the love, patience, and covenant instruction that they have given us. We pray that God will continue to bless them. I Corinthians 13:13, "And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity."

- ✿ Joel and Belinda Brummel
- Noah, Brynn
- ✿ Clayton and Allison Spronk
- Courtney, Brandon, Ashley
- ✿ Alex
- ✿ Brent and Brittany Looyenga

Hull, Iowa

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On August 23, 2004, the Lord blessed our parents,
PROF. BARRY and LORI GRITTERS, with 25 years of marriage.

As their children, we are thankful to our heavenly Father for blessing us with godly parents. He has supplied them with the grace to make sacrifices which ensured that we were brought up in the fear of the Lord.

We pray that God will continue to bless them both in their role as parents and in their calling faithfully to serve our churches.

"All the paths of the LORD are mercy and truth unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies" (Psalm 25:10).

- ✿ Curt and Julie Gritters
- ✿ Kevin and Audra Gritters
- ✿ Eric Gritters
and fiancée Alicia Spriensma
- ✿ Dan Gritters
- ✿ Brad Gritters
- ✿ Lisa Gritters

Hudsonville, Michigan

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

With gratitude to God, on May 29, 2004, we celebrated the 40th anniversary of our parents and grandparents,
GLENN and BETTY KOOIKER.

We are thankful to our heavenly Father for the years He has given them together and for their faithfulness to one another. We are also grateful for their godly instruction and guidance to us throughout the years. We pray that God will continue to bless them and preserve them in their life together.

"And his mercy is upon them that fear him from generation to generation" (Luke 1:50).

- ✿ Veryl and Kandace Heynen
Kassandra, Heath, Kolette, Kalista,
Karina, Dalton, Collin, Koralee,
Ethan, Torrey
- ✿ Carlos and Kristin Tavera
- ✿ Kimmy and Cheryl Kooiker
Christina, Brady, Rochelle,
Shania, Anthony
- ✿ Kerwen and Catherine Kooiker
Kordell, Braxton

Hull, Iowa

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

Our parents,

**CHARLES A. and BETH
VAN MEETEREN**,

celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary on August 16, 2004. We, their children, are extremely thankful to God for such wonderful parents. They have always been a godly example to us, as well as very giving. We sincerely wish to thank them for their years of dedication of godly parenting and instruction. They both have been so hard working, kindhearted, and thoughtful towards any person who happens to come across their paths. They have always been truly godly examples of how a Christian must live his life. Proverbs 17:6, "Children's children are the crown of old men; and the glory of children are their fathers."

- ✿ William and Faith Smit
Peter
- ✿ Lisa and Curt VanMeeteren
- ✿ Jason and Tarah Bertsch
- ✿ Nathan VanMeeteren

Redlands, California

SEMINARY CONVOCATION

September 14
Southwest PRC
7:30 P.M.

Speaker: Prof. Russell Dykstra
"Pastors After God's Heart"

ANNUAL RFPA MEETING

Thursday, September 23, 7:30 P.M.
Grandville PRC

Speaker: Prof. Engelsma
"Reflections on That Rare Creature:
Editor of the SB."

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On August 26, 2004, our parents and grandparents,

ROBERT and EVELYN PASTOOR,

celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. We, their children and grandchildren, are grateful to God for the many blessed years He has given them together. We thank them for their godly example, Christian guidance, and unending love, which is an inspiration to us all. Our prayer is that God will continue to bless them and keep them in His sovereign care. May the promise of Psalter #278, stanza 5, be theirs:

"Those who His gracious covenant keep

The Lord will ever bless;

Their children's children shall rejoice

To see His righteousness."

- ✿ Doug and Joann Pastoor
Nicole, Eric, Stacy, Tracy
- ✿ Jim and Jane Pastoor
David and Christena
Kevin, Steven
- ✿ Dan and Lori Pastoor
Brad and Ericka
Nate and Ellen
Bryan, Jonathan
- ✿ Larry and Pam VanPutten
Laura, Lisa, Scott
- ✿ Steve and Dawn Pastoor
Kaity, Jake, Josh
- ✿ Tom and Brenda Pastoor
Caleb, Joey, Megan

Grand Rapids, Michigan

Have you checked out
the RFPA web page recently?
www.rfpa.org

Reformed Witness Hour

Date	Topics for September	Text
September 5	"Christian Education"	Deuteronomy 6:6, 7
September 12	"Present Suffering Weighed with Eternal Glory"	Romans 8:18
September 19	"The Beauty of a Christian Woman" (1)	1 Peter 3:3, 4
September 26	"The Beauty of a Christian Woman" (2)	1 Peter 3:3, 4