



**A Reformed
Semi-Monthly
Magazine**

The Standard Bearer

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**Vol. 75, No. 14
April 15, 1999**

Risen, Indeed!

Saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon.

Luke 24:34

Indeed!

The Lord is risen indeed!

This emphatic declaration of the fact of the resurrection, an expression of unbounded joy, was pressed from the hearts of the disciples on the evening of the resurrection day.

The two travelers who had departed for Emmaus that afternoon forgot their weariness and returned to Jerusalem to impart to the anxious and wondering disciples the joy that had been born in their own hearts when a stranger joined them in the way, wonderfully explaining the Scriptures to them, pointing out especially the necessity of

the cross unto His entering into glory, and finally becoming known to them in the breaking of the bread as the very Lord they were discussing. But even before the two travelers could give expression to their joy, the eleven, but without Thomas, met them and poured out the great joy of their hearts in the exultant greeting: The Lord is risen indeed!

In this *indeed* they expressed that all their anxiety and wonderment, all their astonishment and worry, had been swallowed up in the certainty of the resurrection.

Risen indeed! The words point back to a day of perplexity. All day, from earliest morning, their hearts had been filled with an anxious *perhaps*. Now the possibility had become reality, the doubt had been changed into certainty. The Lord is risen *indeed*. There is no more room for argument, for anxious discussing, for He hath ap-

peared to Simon! What a blessed termination of a day full of anxious doubts! For such it had been, indeed.

From early dawn Jerusalem had been filled with strange rumors. The watch had left the sepulcher of the Lord. Rumor had it that they had fled because of strange happenings at the grave early that morning, the appearance of an angel, an earthquake. Then the rumor had also been contradicted, and the story was being spread that the disciples had stolen the body of Jesus while the soldiers slept!

Women had returned from the sepulcher, whither they had gone very early in the morning to perform a last service of love upon the blessed body of their Lord, and had reported strange things. They had spoken of an empty grave, of the appearance of angels who had assured them that the Lord had risen from the dead. To the disciples

Herman Hoeksema was the first editor of the Standard Bearer. This Meditation is a reprint from the April 15, 1929 issue of the Standard Bearer.

The Standard Bearer (ISSN 0362-4692) is a semi-monthly, except monthly during June, July, and August, published by the Reformed Free Publishing Association, Inc., 4949 Ivanrest Ave., Grandville, MI 49418.

Postmaster: Send address changes to the Standard Bearer, P.O. Box 603, Grandville, MI 49468-0603.

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\$17.00 per year in the U.S., US\$20.00 elsewhere.

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

Website for RPPA: www.iserv.net/~rfpa

their report had seemed an idle tale. For "Him they saw not," and as long as He had not been seen, the empty grave could only be regarded as circumstantial evidence.

All these matters the disciples had discussed as the eleven were gathered together with others throughout that day. A conclusion was not reached. Even in the late afternoon their hearts were as perplexed as ever.

As two of them left for Emmaus they still continued the discussion without reaching a satisfactory solution of the problem that occupied their minds. For a problem it was to them. Jesus of Nazareth was a prophet of God, mighty in word and deed. Yet, the rulers of the people had condemned Him to death and crucified Him. This it was that they failed to grasp. As yet, they could not see the logic of the cross. They failed to see the necessity of the cross. They had fixed their hope on Him as the One who should redeem Israel. But why should the Redeemer of Israel have to be condemned and die so shamefully? They turned the problem over and over. They considered it from every possible angle. They found no solution. Then, again, they discussed the fact that it was now the third day, the fact of the empty grave, the report of the women, substantiated by some of the disciples, the vision of the angels which said that He was alive. But *Him* they had not seen.

Then the Stranger had joined them and had inquired about the subject of their anxious discussion. They had unburdened their hearts and mind before Him, though they expressed their amazement that one could be such a lone stranger in Jerusalem that he did not know the only subject of interest. He had rebuked them, exposed their unbelief, expounded to them the Scriptures, shown them the necessity of the cross of Christ and the folly of their reasoning. As He opened the Scriptures and talked with them in

the way, their hearts were set a-burning. They constrained Him to abide with them as they reached the place of their destination, urging that the day was far spent. And He had allowed Himself to be persuaded.

Then it happened. For *He* brake the bread as they sat at meat, *He* blessed it and gave it to them. Their eyes were opened. They saw *Him!* And as they were looking on Him with a mixture of amazement and joy, *He* vanished out of their sight. It was but for a moment. But they had seen Him. There could be no doubt, for their burning hearts corroborated the vision of their eyes.

Though the day is far spent and they are weary, they must return and impart their joy to the disciples.

But also among the disciples there is joy. The shadows of doubt have been lifted from their hearts and minds. The Lord hath appeared to Simon. As the weary sojourners from Emmaus approach the place where the disciples are gathered together, they are met with the exultant shout:

The Lord is risen indeed!

◆◆◆ ◆◆◆ ◆◆◆

He is risen!

What a joy is expressed in that one brief sentence!

Joy for the disciples even on that night of the resurrection-day, though they did not fully grasp the implication of their own testimony.

Joy that would expand and grow and become fuller, richer, deeper when the Spirit of the risen and glorified Lord would be poured forth into their hearts and would reveal unto them in ever greater abundance of spiritual riches the profound significance of the resurrection of the Lord.

They would then understand that His resurrection was not a return to them, but an issuing forth into a glory hitherto unknown. In the likeness of sinful flesh He had

come into the world, like unto His brethren in all things, sin excepted. With a body like unto the body of His brethren He had descended into the grave, weak and mortal, corruptible and inglorious, of the dust and earthy. In the form of a servant He had humbled Himself even unto death and the agonies of hell. But in that form of a servant, in that likeness of sinful flesh, He did not return when He arose from the dead. Though, indeed, His resurrection-body was no new creation; though in it He could show the marks of identity with the body that was nailed to the cross, yet it was no more weak but strong, no more corruptible but incorruptible, no more in dishonor but in glory, no more mortal but immortal. The resurrection of the Lord is the swallowing up of death! The Lord is risen indeed!

But even so all is not said.

For they would learn, as they were taught by the Spirit who leadeth into all the truth, that the resurrection of the Lord was not even a return to the state of man as he was before he fell in paradise the first. The risen Lord is not simply like unto the unfallen Adam. For the first man, Adam, was of the earth earthy, but the second man is the Lord from heaven. Even as the work of redemption does not aim at simple restoration of what was marred and destroyed by sin in Paradise, so the resurrection of the Lord is not a return to man's original state. It is an advance to higher glory than Adam ever possessed.

Still more may be said. For the glory of the risen Lord is not to be compared even to the glory the first man Adam might have reached had he never listened to the temptation of the murderer from the beginning. Where would be the justification for the deep and awful way of sin and suffering God chose to lead His children to everlasting glory, the way of the cross of the Son of God, if the same glory might have been reached without

all that darkness? The resurrection of the Lord transcends in glory all that ever was or might have been had the Lord from heaven not come down to unite Himself with the flesh and blood of the children.

The glory of the risen Lord is not earthy but heavenly. He arises from the grave clothed with the glory of the image of the heavenly, in body and soul, the image of the Son, reflected in the human nature in highest possible degree of perfection.

The Lord is risen indeed. He did not return, but went on into the glory of God's perfected work.

What unspeakable joy!



The Lord is risen!

Now the disciples rejoiced, though they did not fathom the depth of their own joy.

Soon they would understand, not only the glory of His resurrection itself, but also the power of that resurrection in its significance for them, for all the brethren, for the church of God!

Then their joy would be full, as they would realize that His resurrection is their own. They would be taught by the Spirit of the risen Lord to see the ground and the reason of His resurrection and to rejoice in their justification through His blood; they would be given to state the beginning of that resurrection in their own hearts and to rejoice in heavenly things; they would know the power of that resurrection as it urged them to seek the things that are above, not the things that are below; and in that power they would look forward to the realization of the blessed hope in His day.

All, all would then be plain before the eye of their faith.

In the light of His resurrection they would then glance back at the cross and behold it in all the power of its saving grace. Even now they did not fully understand that accursed tree and its necessity. But

then they would understand. For, oh, it was the Lord, the Christ, the Head of His brethren that was now risen. He had risen from the death He had voluntarily suffered in their stead and on their behalf. They, these brethren, had sinned and violated God's covenant. Children of wrath and condemnation they were by nature, under the punishment of death. Forfeited, had they, every right to life and favor with God. But from before the foundation of the world, God had anointed the Lord Christ to be Head over His brethren, that He might take their place, that their guilt might be reckoned unto Him, that He might bear their sin in His own body on the tree.

Thus He had come according to that counsel of the Most High. Thus, as the Head of His brethren, inseparably connected with them, He had assumed the form of a servant, though He was Lord of all. And thus, with the sin and death of His brethren upon Him, He had descended into the lowest parts of the earth, struggling and battling with the powers of darkness to overcome them before the face of God and in the way of His justice and truth.

Into the deepest depth of that death had He descended, till He had announced: It is finished!

From that death He arose, He ascended out of the depth of hell into the glory of His resurrection, with the image of the heavenly upon Him and the glory of eternal life radiating from Him.

The Lord is risen! So the disciples now shouted in boundless joy.

Soon they would add: The Lord was raised! Raised by the Father in answer to the announcement from Golgotha: It is finished!

And that answer could come only if He had actually borne away our sin and satisfied the justice of the Most High!

He is risen! He was raised! Raised by the power of the Father! Raised for our justification!

We are justified and have peace with God!

For the Lord is risen!



Risen indeed!

The disciples now attested the fact, for they had seen Him! He had appeared to the sojourners of Emmaus. He had appeared unto Simon!

Greatly did they rejoice in the mere realization that He whom they loved had risen. The certainty of the thing they had seen now filled their hearts with exultation. For somehow the fact of the cross had spelled defeat to them and victory to the enemy; the resurrection announced the judgment of the world, their own and their Lord's victory.

But presently they would see Him no more, yet believe in Him whom they saw not. For the power of His resurrection they would taste in their own hearts and lives. The consciousness of that power of the risen Lord in their hearts would unite itself with their present attestation of the fact of the resurrection and corroborate it.

For the risen Lord would ascend unto His Father and their Father.

He would pass through the highest heavens as the victor over death and hell, leading captivity captive, enriched with heavenly gifts of grace and eternal life to bestow upon His brethren. He would bestow on them the gift of the Holy Spirit, and through that Spirit He would return again unto them, to dwell with them, in them, and in the entire church which the Father had given Him. And living in them He would realize in their hearts His own resurrection-life, the life that is from above, the new and heavenly life, thus making them spiritual citizens of the New Jerusalem.

Then they would taste the power of that resurrection, the fact of which they now attested, be-

cause they saw Him and He had appeared unto Simon. Instead of merely declaring the fact of the resurrection because their eyes had beheld the Risen One, they would witness of the power of the resurrection because their souls had tasted it and the Lord had risen in their own hearts.

The Lord is risen indeed! For He has arisen in our hearts!

Thus may the church of the living Lord victoriously shout with the disciples, accepting their testi-

mony as to the fact, partaking with them of the power of the resurrection-life in their own hearts.

And so our Easter joy becomes an overflowing cup. For the resurrection of the Lord quickens within us a lively hope.

A little while we must carry the joy of the resurrection in the midst of a world full of imperfection and suffering, a world that knows neither Him nor the power of His resurrection. Strangers and pilgrims we are called to be.

But we are born again, through

the resurrection of the Lord, unto a lively hope.

Forward we look to the full realization of what took place when the Lord arose from death and the grave, to the day when the salvation that is about to be revealed in the last time shall be perfected.

For it we long, for we carry the beginning of it in our very soul.

Of its realization we are sure, because the Lord is risen!

Oh, blessed joy!

Risen indeed! □

Editorial

A Defense of the Gospel of Grace Against ECT (5)

The fatal compromise of the gospel of grace by Evangelicals and Catholics Together (ECT) is easily demonstrated. For their cooperation in the culture wars, their working together in evangelism, and their realizing of the unity of Christ's church, ECT needs agreement of evangelicals and Roman Catholics in the faith. Therefore "Evangelicals & Catholics Together: The Christian Mission in the Third Millennium," the document that first identified ECT to the world and described its mission, confesses the oneness of evangelicals and Roman Catholics in the Christian faith itself. The last line of the opening section, "Introduction," reads: "The mission that we embrace together is the necessary consequence of the faith that we affirm together."

Both the evangelicals and the Roman Catholics who are involved in ECT know that the importance of justification for the faith, or gospel, is such that there must be agreement between evangelicals and Roman Catholics on justification. Accordingly, the section that immediately follows, after a short paragraph stating agreement on the Lordship of Jesus, declares that evangelicals and Roman Catholics are one in their belief of justification: "We affirm together that we are justified by grace through faith because of Christ."

These few words are church- and world-shaking.

If the declaration is correct, the 16th century Reformation of the church was a mistake, indeed, the most gigantic mistake made in at least the last 1,000 years of church history. But it was far worse than a huge blunder. It was gross sin:

the ripping apart of the blessed body of Christ, just as Rome has always charged.

To a man, the Reformers insisted that the Reformation was not about abuses, whether of immorality on the part of the clergy or of tyranny on the part of popes. Such was the Reformers' regard for the unity of the church that they freely acknowledged that the Reformation could not be justified on the basis of correcting abuses and improving morals. The Reformation, they maintained, was about the gospel, particularly the doctrine of justification—heart of the gospel.

The Reformation was schism!

For, "we affirm together that we are justified by grace through faith because of Christ."

The entire history of Protestantism in general since the Reformation, as of every Protestant church in particular, has been vain, an ex-

ercise in futility. All the development of distinctive Protestant theology, all the work, all the struggle, all the sacrifice, all the suffering, all the martyrdom has been for nothing. Write "VANITY!" by all means in capital letters, at the beginning and the end of the church-history book of Protestantism.

For, "we affirm together that we are justified by grace through faith because of Christ."

It is now the solemn duty of all evangelical churches to confess to God and the pope the sin of their separation from Rome and to seek admission into the Roman Catholic Church. They must do so at once. The sin of schism is grievous. It is damning. Evangelicals must not continue in it for a moment. Let all evangelical churches in all the world hold a special synod, or general assembly, or conference as soon as possible. Let them authorize a delegation of leaders, including Billy Graham, Charles Colson, and James I. Packer, to present their confession and supplication to the Vicar of Christ in Rome.

And then, we all troop back. Back to a gospel of Christ and Mary, of grace and free will, of faith and works. Back to uncertainty about final salvation. Back to certainty of hellish agonies at death in purgatory. Back to participation in the sacrificing of Jesus Christ again every day. Back to the worship of a piece of bread. Back to the confessional and its satisfactions. Back to the authority of church and tradition above that of Holy Scripture. Back to an ungracious god of salvation by works of the law.

With our little ones.

For, "we affirm together that we are justified by grace through faith because of Christ."

Only one factor would mitigate somewhat these necessary implications for Protestant churches of ECT's affirmation of evangelical and Roman Catholic oneness in the gospel-truth of justification. This

would be that Rome has changed its doctrine of justification since the time and formulations of the Council of Trent.

I challenge ECT to "affirm together" that the Roman Catholic Church has changed her doctrine of justification since Trent.

In fact, ECT's affirmation of the fundamental oneness of present-day evangelicals and Roman Catholics as regards justification is merely that: a description of the agreement of present-day evangelicals and Rome. It does not describe any agreement between the Roman Catholic doctrine of justification and the Reformation's doctrine of justification. ECT's affirmation is evangelical compromise of the Reformation's doctrine of justification.

What is missing from ECT's affirmation?

Only the word that makes all the difference between the truth of the Reformation and the false doctrine of Rome!

Only the word that makes all the difference between the one, only, true gospel of grace and the false gospel of salvation by man's will, works, and worth!

Only the word "only"!

ECT's affirmation, grounding the whole enterprise in the gospel, says, "... we are justified by grace through faith because of Christ."

The confession of the Reformation was, and is: "We are justified by grace *only* through faith *only* because of Christ *only*." This positive confession necessarily included, and includes, the negative, "We reject as false doctrine the teaching that justification is by grace *and merit* through faith *and works* because of Christ *and the sinner himself*."

ECT's affirmation is a compromise, not by Rome but by the evangelicals. As a compromise, it approves the Roman Catholic heresy. The effect is the repudiation of the Reformation doctrine of justification.

James I. Packer, leading evan-

gelical in ECT, openly admits that the statement on justification is deliberate compromise. In his contribution to the book that defends the original ECT document, Packer writes:

Neither evangelicals nor Roman Catholics can stipulate that things they believe, which the other side does not believe, be made foundational to partnership at this point; so ECT *lets go Protestant precision on the doctrine of justification* ... ("Crosscurrents among Evangelicals," in *Evangelicals & Catholics Together: Toward a Common Mission*, ed. Charles Colson and Richard John Neuhaus, Word, 1995, p. 167; emphasis added; hereafter, TCM).

This is bad enough. Sacrificing "Protestant precision" on justification is the same as sacrificing Athanasian precision on the Trinity, or Chalcedonian precision on the person and natures of Christ, or Dordtian precision on total depravity. It is to let go the gospel, Christ, and God.

But Packer, leading representative of the evangelicals, goes further. He denies the fundamental importance of the doctrine of justification by faith alone as the heart of the gospel of grace. He confronts the criticism that points out that the doctrine of justification by faith alone and the doctrine of justification by faith and works "express two different gospels, one of which is not a true gospel." Packer responds that "evangelicalism seeks to lead people into salvation, and what brings them salvation is not any theory about faith and justification, but trusting Jesus himself as Lord, Master, and divine Savior" (TCM, p. 168).

Of course, it is true that "what brings ... salvation is ... trusting Jesus himself as Lord, Master, and divine Savior," except that Packer should say, "trusting Jesus himself *only*." Exactly this is the importance, indeed the necessity, of, not a certain "theory" about faith and

justification, but *God's own truth* about faith and justification.

Proclamation of the gospel-truth that sinners are justified by grace *only* through faith *only* because of Christ *only* is the means by which the Holy Spirit causes elect men and women to trust in Jesus Christ only and thus receive salvation.

On the other hand, proclamation of the lie that sinners are justified by grace *and merit* through faith *and works* because of Christ *and the sinner himself* causes sinners to trust in Jesus *and man*, whether Mary, some saint, or oneself. All those who trust in someone or something in addition to Jesus Christ will be eternally damned.

As we desire men's salvation, we will uncompromisingly confess

and contend for the pure truth of justification by faith alone. As we desire men's salvation, we will uncompromisingly condemn and curse the false doctrine of justification by faith and works.

Packer is defending ECT by advocating doctrinal indifference (at which one who has read his introduction to his and Johnston's translation of Luther's *The Bondage of the Will* is astonished). This doctrinal indifference characterizes the other evangelicals in ECT as well. Charles Colson expressed it in his book on the church, which was influential in creating ECT. Commenting on the fact that cooperation in opposing abortion has got Roman Catholic priests and Protestant lay people jailed together,

Colson wrote: "Many have been arrested, but I doubt that they've sat around in those bleak jail cells debating the Council of Trent" (*The Body, Word*, 1992, p. 107).

To which the response might be, "Would these Protestants in bleak jails debate with Jewish anti-abortionists the council of the Sanhedrin that condemned Jesus?"

ECT is evangelical compromise with the Roman heresy on justification.

Thus ECT fatally compromises the Reformation and biblical gospel of grace.

It is a commentary on our age that the question must yet be answered, "Does it matter? Is it serious? Is it intolerable?"

— DJE
(to be concluded)

Day of Shadows

Homer Hoeksema

The Prediluvian Period (5)

Chapter III

A Significant Genealogy-Chronology

It is well at this point in our discussion, after the history of Cain and Abel, that we give our attention to the genealogical and chronological data of the prediluvian period furnished us by Scripture. This is necessary if only for the reason that Scripture itself furnishes this data, so that we are compelled to face the question of its meaning and significance. Or,

if you will, we are compelled to face the question of the revelatory significance of this data. Why, for example, does the Bible furnish us with a partial record of the line of Cain, taking us exactly to the point of Lamech and his family? Why do the Scriptures trace the line of Seth-Noah in full? Why, too, does the Word of God furnish us with all the data concerning the birth and death of the generations of Adam-via-Seth?

Part of the answer to these questions lies, certainly, in the fact that from the point of the conflict of Cain and Abel forward, there is a history which moves toward the

consummation of the Flood along *two* lines. The positive line of that history is represented in the generations of Adam-via-Seth, and for this reason it is this genealogy and its chronology which is recorded in "the book of the generations of Adam" in Genesis 5. But all the rest of the history of that era must also be understood only in the light of the history of that positive line; in fact, in the deepest sense the rest of the history *is* the history of that line, belongs to it, is of significance only in relation to it. The data which Scripture furnishes, both genealogical and chronological, as well as all the other factual data in

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Genesis 4:16 to Genesis 6, must serve to place that history in its proper light and proper perspective. (It is interesting in this connection to study the relation between the "toledoth" of Genesis 2:4 and of Genesis 5:1, and to note the apparent overlapping between them.)

The Data

The data which Scripture furnishes is found, first of all, in Genesis 4:17-22. In this passage the line of Adam-via-Cain is traced to the eighth generation:

1. Adam
2. Cain
3. Enoch
4. Irad
5. Mehujael
6. Methusael
7. Lamech
8. Jabal, Jubal, Tubal-Cain; Naamah.

Concerning these generations we may note:

1. That no chronology accompanies this brief genealogy, as in the case of Adam-via-Seth. It is perfectly reasonable, however, to assume that these generations generally parallel the generations of Seth.

2. That the genealogy of Cain is not carried beyond the eighth generation. This is not only to be connected with the fact that, for the purposes of Old Testament history, it was the eighth generation which was especially significant; but it also points us to the fact that the line of Cain has no continuation; it *perishes*. If we look at the fact that it is parallel to that of Methuselah in the generations of Seth — and Methuselah lived up to the year of the Flood — then it is not at all impossible that this eighth generation would have been the (first) generation of Cain's line which actually did perish in the Flood. Moreover, it is not at all impossible that this is the generation of the time "when men began to multiply on the face of the earth" (Gen. 6:1).

In the second place, there is the detailed data of Genesis 5 and Genesis 7:6. Concerning this data we may note the following:

1. It consistently follows the formula, "N. lived x number of years and begat N.; and N. lived after he begat N. y number of years, and begat sons and daughters. And all the days of N. were z number of years; and he died." This means, therefore, that in this genealogy we have an unbroken chain from Adam to Noah, a chain which is accompanied by an exact chronology which totals 1,656 years.

2. The son mentioned in each instance is not necessarily the first-born. We know that Seth was not the firstborn of Adam. Cain and Abel both preceded him; and obviously others preceded him (among whom was Cain's wife). But *one* son is mentioned, the significant son, the son in whom the line is continued all the way to Noah. It is by this son that the chronology is dated in each case.

3. In order to have the full picture, we must bear in mind that in the case of each generation it is specifically mentioned that after the named son was born, there were sons and daughters born. How many we are not told. But the fact is significant. We certainly do not get the picture, either with respect to the line of Seth or with respect to that of Cain, that the population of the earth was limited to those who are named and their offspring. The contrary is true.

4. Finally, we may mention the fact that in this data we get the picture not only of a chronological genealogy, but also of one in which the generations were characterized by tremendous longevity. The one exception to this longevity in the line of Seth is, of course, Enoch, who was translated at the age of 365 years. Again, we may legitimately assume that the same longevity generally characterized the generations of Cain.

With respect to all of this data we maintain that it must be accepted literally, so that the Scriptures do indeed present us with a genealogy which is at the same time a chronology. We may mention in passing that the Samaritan Text presents a chronology which is much shorter, totaling only 1,307 years, and the Septuagint presents one which is much longer, totaling 2,242 years. We hold with the Hebrew Text, however, for two reasons:

1. There is no textual evidence against the Hebrew Text.

2. The deviations presented by the other texts can be readily explained as attempts to emend the record as presented in the Hebrew Text, i.e., either as deliberate attempts to shorten the lifespan of some or as deliberate attempts to lengthen the lifespan and the total number of years.

There have been various objections raised against the literal acceptance of this genealogy-chronology. We may consider them briefly.

1. The objection is brought that the great longevity pictured in the passage is altogether unrealistic and impossible. Our reply is that this is a rationalistic objection, not based on Scripture itself.

2. It has been objected that Scripture itself more than once presents a genealogy in which some generations are skipped, so that, for example, the line may run via a grandson instead of a son. To this we reply:

- a. When this is the case, there is scriptural evidence of it. If this is to be maintained with respect to Genesis 5, the evidence will have to be produced from Scripture.

- b. Besides, in this case Scripture itself presents a genealogy which is accompanied by chronological data. How, in this light, are generations to be interpolated?

3. It has been objected that the Scriptures are not interested in chronology and that therefore it is

not legitimate, but biblicistic, to discover a chronology in this and similar passages. To this we reply, in the first place, that we fully grant this argument if by it is meant that the Scriptures are not interested in the mere passage of time as such, as a succession of days and months and years, or is not interested in mere dating. Nor are the Scriptures interested in merely satisfying our curiosity as to the length of human history or the antiquity of the world. But *no* historian, sacred or profane, is interested in this naked question.

In the second place, we must remember that there are deeper issues involved here, issues which concern one's view of history as well as one's view of science in relation to the Scriptures and one's view of the entire creation *versus* the evolution question.

In the third place, one is confronted by the simple fact that the Scriptures present this data. It is right there. Moreover, similar data is presented in the Scriptures with respect to other periods of history. We may ask: what is the student of Holy Scripture going to do with such data — ignore it, in order to accept alleged data from other sources, or accept it at face value?

In the fourth place, as we will point out later, this chronology is not a mere recounting of the passage of a certain amount of time, but is of very great significance.

4. Finally, it is objected that there is evidence from science which contradicts the scriptural data, both as to the time of the origin of the universe and as to the antiquity of the human race. We shall not enter into all this alleged evidence in detail. Our position is that the testimony of the Scriptures must stand as the only authoritative testimony, that so-called outside evidence can neither contradict it nor even "interpret" it, but that rather the outside evidence must be tested and interpreted by the Scriptures.

Significance

A study of the data of this genealogy-chronology brings out sharply the several characteristics of the prediluvian period which we mentioned in our introduction to this period. There we mentioned especially the following in this connection:

1. The sharp division into two distinct lines, viz., that of the seed of the woman and that of the seed of the serpent.

2. The fact that already in this period the Lord very plainly establishes His covenant organically in the line of continued generations.

3. The fact that this period is characterized by rapid development and speedy degeneration and decline along the line of the descendants of Cain. (It should be noted in this connection that the view of history which posits a restraint of sin in this period by a "common grace" and which even cites the words of Genesis 6:3 as scriptural proof is totally unrealistic and contrary to fact. There never was a period which gave less historical evidence of such a restraint. This period is frequently mentioned in the New Testament as an example to the contrary.)

To these we may add the fact that it is very plain by way of comparison that the line of the human race, positively speaking, i.e., of redeemed, elect humanity — the new humanity in Christ — is continued in the generations of Seth. In "the book of the generations of Adam" there follows in Genesis 5 an account of the line of *Seth only*. There is a beautiful and comforting truth implied here, namely, that that line of Seth constitutes *the* race. Not in the mighty and rich and famous line of Cain-Lamech is that race represented, but in the line of Seth. The line of Cain and the ungodly, great as they may seem to be in this world, are the branches which are cut off from the tree of the human race. Also in the respective genealogies this is evident. Cain's genealogy, in Genesis 4, is carried

to the eighth generation only, and there it is dropped. It has no continuity, but perishes in the Flood. In fact, it is not at all impossible, in view of the chronology of the period, that that very eighth generation was one which perished in the Deluge. But Seth's line proceeds to Noah and his sons — to Noah, the righteous, who finds grace in the eyes of the Lord, who also walks with God, and who becomes heir of the world.

But there are several details and historical factors brought out by a careful study of this genealogy-chronology (and its counterpart in the genealogy of Cain) which shed light on the characteristics mentioned above. When we take note of these factors, the history of this period assumes a greater degree of reality, becomes more realistic and concrete, as well as more readily understandable, so that its spiritual characteristics come to stand in sharp relief.

In the first place, a study of the chronology will make clear the fact that in this period, when there was as yet no written record of God's revelation, there was a very strong and trustworthy line of *oral tradition*. True, there is abundant evidence that God made known His Word to His people directly during this period; and there were men like Enoch, a prophet, and Noah, a preacher of righteousness, through whom God spoke His Word. But there was no written Word by means of which God's revelation might be transmitted from generation to generation. But the historical situation was such that an oral tradition sufficiently strong to take the place of the written Word of God was possible.

Consider the fact that for all the generations up to and including Lamech, the father of Noah, a direct, firsthand tradition from Adam was possible. For Lamech, who was born in the year 874 after creation, was a contemporary of Adam for some 56 years before Adam died.

This means that Noah, the heir of the new world, could receive the tradition of the history of Paradise and the fall and the protevangel secondhand, i.e., with only one link between him and Adam. Comparatively, this would mean that in the new dispensation the tradition of Christ would have reached into Reformation times secondhand; and, considering that Noah lived to the age of 950 years, it would mean that the tradition of Christ could reach us in the twentieth century only thirdhand!

If, in addition to this, we assume, as we certainly may, that there must have been a very close-knit community of the people of God in those times, then we can readily understand that this oral tradition was very strong and that it was quite capable of taking the place of a written record.

Considering also that not only Noah, but also Shem was a link between the prediluvian and the postdiluvian world, this same oral tradition assumes great importance with respect to the period between the Flood and the patriarchs, and, in fact, between the Flood and Moses.

Similarly, we may note that there was but one link between Enoch, who was a prophet, and Noah, in whose time Enoch's prophecy was fulfilled.

In the second place, a study of the comparative chronology of the Sethites and the Cainites reveals some interesting and significant parallels. It reveals that Lamech and his wicked family must have been contemporaries, for example, of Enoch. This surely helps to explain the fact that Enoch must have lived in a time of rapidly increasing wickedness, as is plain from his prophecy in Jude, 14 and 15. It would also serve to explain that Enoch was translated in a time of increasing conflict and persecution, as is suggested by the Scriptures. This fact also implies that the Lamech-family and its contemporaries and offspring were contem-

poraries of all the generations of the Sethites from Enoch to the time of the Flood.

In the third place, a study of the data presented by Scripture will reveal that there must have been a tremendous "population explosion" during this period, both in the line of Cain and in the line of Seth. In this connection, there is the factor of the longevity of mankind during this period — something that is almost inconceivable in its ramifications and importance to us, who live but 70 or 80 years. Consider the fact that it was the usual thing for men to live more than 900 years! Then, too, there is the factor that the reproductive capacity of mankind must have been extremely great. In each case, in Genesis 5, after the birth of the named son is recorded, it is mentioned that N. "begat sons and daughters." How many sons and daughters we are not told. But it does not require a great imagination, when this fact is combined with the fact of the race's longevity, to conceive of a tremendously fast-growing population, so that by the time of the Flood there could easily have been a population of *millions*.

If each human pair, beginning with Adam and Eve, produced only 3 couples, the seventh generation alone would number more than 2,100, and the population more than 3,500; the eighth would number 6,500+, and the population 10,000+; but the ninth would mount to 18,000+, with a population of 28,000+; while the tenth would jump to 55,000+, with a population of 84,000+. And these are extremely conservative projections. (For some interesting notes on this subject, see the appendix at the conclusion of this chapter.)

Now all this is of great significance and sheds light on several aspects of the course of history during this period.

First of all, it sets in sharp relief the fact that *few*, that is, eight souls were saved in the ark. This

indeed becomes an astounding fact when we consider the longevity of the patriarchs before the Flood and the large numbers of the population in the line of Seth as well as the line of Cain. As we have indicated, there must have been a multitude of men in both lines. In fact, under normal circumstances there must have been a veritable multitude of the children of Seth living when the Flood came and destroyed the first world. Seth was born in the year 130 after creation. When he was one hundred five years old, Enos was born to him. And after the birth of Enos, Seth lived another eight hundred seven years, during which time sons and daughters were born unto him. At the age of nine hundred twelve, or in the year 1,042, he died. It is easy to see that under normal circumstances there must have been children Seth who were still living at the time of the Flood and who perished in the Flood. The same applies to the patriarchs after Seth.

When you consider that all these men begat sons and daughters, who in turn had their children and children's children (and then remember that a 900-year life span was ordinary during that age), then it is not difficult to see that there must have been many thousands, and even possibly millions, of the children of Seth still living at the time of the Flood, some of them even of the second and third generations. Yet there were but eight souls saved in the ark. Is this not an astounding picture? And does this not also lend new emphasis to the fact that the days of Noah were typical of the days preceding the return of the Son of Man? In that first world there were only a few who were righteous when the Lord came for judgment in the Flood; at the coming of the Son of Man we must expect a similar situation.

In the second place, it is these very natural factors of longevity and rapid increase of population which contributed to and made possible the creation of that spiri-

tual development and that ultimate situation in which the Flood's judgment was wrought and in which a very small remnant was saved.

The reduction of the remnant of the faithful people of God to a very small number, the apostasy in the generations of Seth, the amalgamation of the line of Seth with that of the Cainites in large numbers, the rapid growth of wickedness to the point that the measure of iniquity was filled and that world could not go on any longer, the "filling" of the earth with violence — all of these do not merely "happen," nor do they or can they come about in a situation where there is a relatively small population and a relatively small degree of natural development of the race. No, there are certain natural factors which must be present to create such a situation. These very natural factors were indeed present in such a combination that this situation could come about in the short span of 1,656 years.

For one thing, the natural factors were present to bring about precisely such a tremendous growth of population and such a fast development of culture and civilization and such a manifold development and variety in the human race itself as were necessary to bring about a rapid and full development of sin. Such a development of sin is impossible until there is a certain degree of natural development. Even numerically, it requires more than a few men to bring to expression all the "potential" of sin. It requires, too, a development of so-called culture and a development of and refinement of civilization and its products in order to bring about the situation and the means for the full development of sin.

The sin of Adam is a root sin. That root sin does not bear its full and manifold fruit immediately, for the simple reason that the natural factors to make this possible are not present immediately. The organic development of sin goes hand in

hand with the organic development of the race. In the first world the factors were present to produce a very rapid organic development of the race, and, therefore, of sin. The tremendous longevity of the various generations resulted in each generation's having an opportunity of centuries to develop. Add to this the large degree of overlapping of generations, which made it possible for various generations to co-operate in development and for the various generations to profit from one another and to reap the fruits of one another's development. Then you have the ideal situation for a rapid development in natural life, and, along with it, the rapid development and bringing to manifestation of the fruits of iniquity.

If you add to all this the fact that it was Cain's race rather than the generations of Seth who were endowed with those gifts and talents, that genial power of invention and production by which man subdues the earth, makes the powers and resources of creation his servants, and wrests from nature the means to enlarge and enrich human life from a natural point of view, the picture becomes complete. Bear in mind that this is the picture which the Scriptures present. It is Cain's genius which conceives of building the first city, and which calls it after the name of his son, Enoch. It is in the line of Cain that you find the giants of that era's civilization — men like the three sons of Lamech. In the line of Cain, in other words, an unusual degree of natural power of mind and body displayed itself and rapidly developed.

These same natural factors would bring about the situation described in the beginning of Genesis 6. They would explain the fact that "men began to multiply in the earth." It is easy to see, for example, that it was at the time of the generations of the sons of Lamech that the situation was ripe for a "population explosion" in the

literal sense of the word. This, in turn, would bring about a situation when the amalgamation of the line of Seth and the line of Cain would become both possible and attractive. And it would also bring about a situation in which it would rapidly become true that the earth was literally filled with iniquity and violence. If you add up all these factors, it is not at all difficult to imagine that the situation was created in which there was increasingly sharp conflict between the faithful children of God and the ungodly, and in which the faithful were increasingly persecuted and deprived of a place in the earth.

Taking all these factors into consideration, therefore, we can come to a better understanding of that ultimate situation at the time of the Flood, when the measure of iniquity was filled and when a remnant of only eight souls was saved through water.

Appendix

The following is quoted from *The Genesis Flood*, by John C. Whitcomb, Jr. and Henry M. Morris (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1967), pp. 25ff.

The record in Genesis 5 clearly implies that men had large families in those days. Although in most cases only one son is named in each family (apparently for the purpose of tracing the line of descent from Adam to Noah), it is also said that each "begat sons and daughters," so that each family must have had at least four children, and probably many more. Furthermore, the age of the fathers at the birth of each of the named sons ranged from 65 years (in the case of Mahalaleel and Enoch) to 500 years (in Noah's case). Consequently the Bible implies that: (1) men typically lived for hundreds of years, (2) their procreative powers persisted over hundreds of years also, and (3) through the combined effects of long lives and large families, mankind was rap-

idly "filling the earth" (Gen. 1:28; 6:1, 11).

All things considered, it is certainly very conservative to estimate that each family had, say, six children, and that each new generation required ninety years on the average. That is, assume the first family (Adam and Eve) had six children; the three families that could be established from these had six children each; and the nine families resulting from these each had six children, and so on. Actually, each probably had far more than six children, but this figure will allow for those who did not marry, who died prematurely, etc. At an

average figure of ninety years per generation, which seems far higher than was probably actually the case, one can calculate that there were some eighteen generations in the 1,656 years from Adam to the Flood.

The total number of people in the n th generation can be calculated on this basis as equal to $2(3)^n$. Thus, at the end of the first generation (n equals one), the number in the family was $2(3)$, or 6. At the end of two generations, it was $2 \times 3 \times 3$, or 18. Finally, at the end of 17 generations, the number was 258 million and, at the end of 18 generations, it was 774 million! If, at

this time, only one previous generation was still living, the total population of the earth would have been over 1,030 million! And we believe that anyone would agree that these calculations are extremely conservative, assuming only that the biblical statements are true.

Note: The above is quoted only to show the possibilities. In a situation as described above, the authors note further, the rate of population growth is 1.5% annually, while today a rate of 2% or even 3% is not unusual in so-called underdeveloped countries. □

Contending for the Faith

Rev. Bernard Woudenberg

A Friendship That Ended with Anger and Disappointment

Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go.

Proverbs 22:24

Schilder was clearly angry. He had received Hoeksema's first response to the extended series of articles he had been writing about our *Declaration of Principles*, and he didn't like it. He said:

The fact that I now provisionally stop finds its reason in an article from the *Standard Bearer* of February 15, 1951, which I received by airmail. In this article colleague Hoeksema begins to

write something about my series of articles concerning the *Brief Declaration*. All right.

If he had dealt extensively with them, or had announced that he would, we would probably have continued and given an overview of his answer with a response from our side.

But what appears now?

This is what happened: colleague Hoeksema says, "several points of Schilder's articles are not to the point," which means that they do not touch the point in question.

I am not at all angry about this.... But in this case I feel like saying, "All right, if that is what you think, I had better stop."

He denied it; but clearly it was so. He was angry, and we discover that it apparently was not that much out of character for him, as he went on to point out:

Let me speak for myself in answer to this. From certain sides, they try to create the impression that the undersigned is a kind of prelate in the church who just sticks to his own point, who gets angry when contradicted, and only wants to have things his own way. Such nonsense makes me angry. I prefer to say clearly that I think it is a venomous attack when they say: "K.S. gets angry when they don't share his opinion, and he does not want to hear people say that it is not binding."

Here was a side of Klaas Schilder we had not seen before. He could be very short with those who did not agree with him. This came out more as this last, or what he called his "Provisional Closing Remarks," brought his exchange if not his friendship with Herman Hoeksema to an end.

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In a way this has to be surprising.

For months Schilder had been writing; and, as renowned as he was for his scholarship, what he wrote did not demonstrate that. First written, it would appear, as a series of articles in *De Reformatie* (*The Reformation*), the theological weekly paper of which he had been editor for years, his articles represented themselves as a critique of the Protestant Reformed *Brief Declaration of Principles* drawn up at our synod the preceding spring, seemingly with the purpose of preventing the final adoption of the *Declaration* the following year. They had this value, that they constituted Schilder's first effort to address the differences which had always been there between Hoeksema and himself, the Protestant Reformed and the Liberated churches.

In 1939, during Schilder's first visit to America, Hoeksema had developed a deep affection for Schilder. Here at last was a competent theologian willing to take him seriously, and to work with him in developing theological thought as friends. But the Second World War came and stopped that, forcing him to wait until it was ended. At that point Hoeksema sought to take up where they left off, and with that in mind invited Schilder again to the States — at which time his own sudden illness intervened and prevented any meaningful discussion between the two of them from taking place. At his departure, however, and in large part at the insistence of Rev. Ophoff, Schilder promised to address the matter of our differences when he got home. But that did not happen until, at the late date of 1950, the *Declaration of Principles* appeared on the scene.

This *Declaration of Principles*, of course, was the occasion; and by that time relationships had become severely strained, to the point where the possibility of a calm and friendly discussion had all but dis-

appeared. Still, it was something; and what Schilder wrote in *De Reformatie* was followed with a great deal of interest by all who could read the Dutch language, and especially so, one can imagine, by Rev. Hoeksema himself. It was his intention to wait until the series was finished, and the thinking of Dr. Schilder was clearly laid out, before he gave answer. But Schilder's articles were often brief — one consisting of no more than two brief sentences — written as though off-the-cuff with whatever fleeting thoughts happened to strike Schilder's mind. Still, there was always that sense of anticipation that in the end something of substance would come.

If there was a first, primary approach Schilder took, it was in criticism of the *Declaration's* composition. It was so poorly written, he claimed, as to be unworthy of official adoption — while, ironically, his own criticisms were often so obscure that even today one can hardly follow what he was trying to say, as, for example, when he wrote:

To receive a dogmatic statement is not sufficient for me. I don't want a statement but an *address*. Therefore the big question is: *what* do we receive at our baptism?

There we are. How can we sail the Pacific (I quote Twissus, somewhat mischievously)? No, of course, you don't read that in Twissus. He tells the Arminians (in Corv. 257a) that they with their doctrine of a foreseen faith as ground for election, can as easily philosophize as they can organize a sailing trip on a calm sea, a *mare pacificum*. A pacific sea is of course not the Pacific Ocean. Still, we have to cross all the oceans of time ... till later; until the horizon is reached and we arrive at that gate on which God has written: *salus* (which Twissus called the terminus; *salus* means eternal salvation at the end of the track). Whatever our course of life is, the Pacific or the Atlantic Ocean, the all decisive question remains how

did I get on that ship? Was I put there with a beautiful, philosophical, dogmatic, orthodox *statement* that salvation is only for the elect, because: a) ..., b) ..., c) ..., d) ..., and so on? Or am I placed on this ship with a *promise*, an *admonition*, a *threat*, a *stipulation* here, and a *stipulation* there? How do I sail?

To Schilder, no doubt, this may well have made good sense; but for those reading his writing, it was certainly difficult to comprehend. And it came from one who accused others of obscure writing.

That was only the start. As Schilder went on, he spent considerable effort eliciting quotations from famous supralapsarian theologians of the past who made use of the word "condition" in what they wrote, anticipating apparently that Hoeksema, being a supralapsarian himself, would be impressed and drop his objections to the use of that term in the present controversy with them.

Meanwhile, through the whole of his series there ran a persistent, misconstrued presumption as to what the *Declaration of Principles* was all about. In actuality it had been set forth as a simple and welcome opportunity to answer the questions of those immigrants who were thinking of joining our churches as to whether we had a specific view of the covenant which could be expected to be heard from our pulpits, and under which our members are expected to live in accord with Article 31 of the Church Order; and it consisted in the end of nothing more than a pointing out of the confessional principles which are to be recognized and observed. Schilder, however, persists throughout his articles in considering it as a new creed, and a test of those who might join our churches.

But more serious than all this was Schilder's persistent avoidance of grappling forthrightly with the doctrinal problems that divided us. Only superficially were they

touched on, and often condescendingly, as though there is something wrong about taking doctrinal considerations seriously. Yet it was something, and it seemingly raised for Hoeksema the hope that serious discussion of our differences might still come to pass.

So finally, in February of 1951, Hoeksema decided he could wait no longer. Schilder's thoughts were developing so slowly, and he had gone on so long, that readers were beginning to ask if any response to them was going to be given, while some were even suggesting that, if Hoeksema would not, they would try to respond to what Schilder was writing themselves. At that point Hoeksema decided to break with his intent to wait, and lay out at least some starting approach to the most significant things that Schilder had brought up.

Bypassing Schilder's repeated disparagements, Hoeksema simply and graciously remarked, "Much of what Dr. Schilder wrote is not to the point, and we, therefore, can safely eliminate it from our discussion" — taking note of the fact that this included his remarks about supralapsarianism, Heyns, and Schilder's quotations from the past — after which he went on to focus on those few points with which our differences were actually concerned. First, he pointed to Schilder's criticism of the *Declaration* for stating, "election ... is the sole cause and fountain of all our salvation." It had been Schilder's contention that election is actually the ground of our salvation and not its cause or fountain. But Hoeksema pointed out that what the *Declaration* said was taken directly from the Canons of Dordt, holding creedal authority in all Reformed churches. And then he turned briefly to Schilder's treatment of the term "condition," pointing out that he had failed to give one of its definitions, and precisely that one which our differences were about.

His remarks were brief, and

were meant to be preliminary, but clearly a sense of satisfaction on Hoeksema's part. At last, and even though belatedly, there was the beginning of a discussion which he had sought after for so many years, as he said:

O, how sorry I am, that all these things were not discussed between us as deputies for correspondence, rather than to confer, behind our back, with the Revs. DeJong and Kok, who were not authorized, neither, judging from the letter of Prof. Holwerda, capable to speak for our churches! The Lord willing, we are coming next summer, if the world situation permits. We have reservations on the boat for the twenty-fourth of June and plan to remain in the Netherlands till the beginning of September, that is, if they still want to see us, and if they still desire correspondence in spite of our doctrinal differences. Otherwise, they better let us know, and we will cancel our reservations.

Hoeksema had always believed that matters of faith and conviction are best dealt with openly and with mutual concern between Christians, and not avoided and covered up as had been done with him in 1924, and with Schilder in 1944.

When, however, these remarks came to Schilder's attention, having been sent to him by special airmail, the result was to arouse Schilder's notorious sense of anger. Evidently quite oblivious to how condescending his own attitude toward Hoeksema and the Protestant Reformed Churches had been, he was infuriated when Hoeksema told him that some of the things he had written were not going to be taken seriously, as we noted above.

Still, when it came down to it, it would appear that there was more here than just a personal affront. Schilder was not happy with the direction in which Hoeksema was going — that is, toward a doctrinal exchange of thought. He wasn't interested in that; for his concern was far more immediate

and practical, as he went on to say:

The point in question is only this: may you dare to *break a church apart* for a dogmatic formula of Schilder which Hoeksema can attack, or one of Hoeksema which Schilder can attack, while indeed both in good conscience subscribe to the Three Forms of Unity....

For me the point was this ... take now, just once, as an example, one of the deputies for contact with Churches abroad, who has objections against making the *Brief Declaration* binding and has made it very clear that he could not possibly be convinced to promise not to teach or to propagate anything which does not totally agree with the *Brief Declaration*. He would also refuse to promise this if he would perhaps move to America. This is the fine point: would he — seeing this refusal — be accepted as a member of a Protestant Reformed Church.... Could he become member, yes or no? ... Only take the bare fact that one of us would not subscribe to the *Brief Declaration* (arguments don't count) or in any case would refuse to promise not to work against the *Brief Declaration*. Can they become members in full right, yes or no? That and that only is the point.

If you say, "No" ... all right, then we are finished.

This was Schilder's concern. He was interested in getting his own people into the Protestant Reformed Churches who would be free to challenge the teachings of Hoeksema and introduce their Liberated views in their stead. Although supposedly he had accepted his ejection from the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands because of doctrinal principle, when it came to his relationship to us, that was not his concern. And least of all was he interested in understanding and evaluating the teachings of Hoeksema on these points to see if they were correct. His interest was in finding a base in America upon which his churches could be established, and

from which his views could be propagated. And, if that was not to be allowed, his interest in us was finished.

There was one thing more. Hardly had Hoeksema sent off his response to Schilder than he received an issue of *De Reformatie*, written actually some time before (the boats carrying mail traveled slowly in those days), with an article on the very thing he had just written about, that the *Declaration's* expression, "election is the cause and fountain of our salvation," was actually taken directly from the Canons of Dordt. If there was ever a situation which called for an acknowledgment of error and an apology, it was this; but not for Schilder. Instead he boldly claimed

that he had known this all along, and accordingly allowed that this expression might be used in this way, while in fact he had been very insistent that a statement such as that was not "theoretically precise, accurate, scholarly terminology." He had in effect denied the accuracy of what the Canons said. But then he went even further than that, claiming that although "it says *fountain* or *spring* (*fons*), if you want a more precise distinction, it means something different than *cause*." If there had been one thing that had always drawn Hoeksema and Schilder together, it had been their mutual respect for the confessions in a day when so many dealt with them only lightly and were even casting them aside. These they had agreed were the standards by

which it was to be determined what is truly Reformed; and for that reason the *Declaration of Principles* had been written so carefully in terms of what the confessions said. But now Schilder was ready to declare that not what was written, but what he thought, was what the confessions actually meant. And with that Hoeksema knew, well before Schilder's angry reaction to his article was written, that their relationship was for all practical purposes done. As he ruefully concluded, "Instead of admitting that he erred, and that he never thought of the confessions, he makes things worse by depriving the terms of the confession of all objective meaning. A dangerous business." □

Ministering to the Saints

Rev. Douglas Kuiper

The History of the Diaconate (2) Its Deformation

In previous articles we set forth two main principles governing our view of the diaconate. First, we argued that a scriptural view of the office of deacon places it on a par with the offices of pastor and elder. Second, by examining the institution of the diaconate, we saw that the fundamental work of the deacon is to care for the poor of the church.

Although the church abided by these principles for a time, she gradually abandoned both. By the Middle Ages, the church's government had become hierarchical, so

that the deacon was viewed as inferior to both elder and pastor — or, as it came to be, to both priest and bishop. Furthermore, the church assigned to the deacons many responsibilities entirely unrelated to the care of the poor, while giving this important work to others. A third way in which the church deformed the diaconate was by modifying the qualifications for the office which Scripture gives in I Timothy 3.

The office of deacon, by the time of the Great Reformation, stood in need of its own reformation.

Let us examine these three areas of deformation in more detail.

Until the fourth century, deacons were generally considered to

be equal to presbyters (also known at first as bishops; we would call them elders). The office of deacon and of presbyter, from the time of their institution by the apostles until the end of the first century, were considered to be the two fundamental offices in the congregation. Early in the second century the church fathers, beginning with Ignatius, began distinguishing more clearly between the offices. The office of bishop and of presbyter were now viewed as two distinct offices, with that of bishop corresponding somewhat to that of pastor in our churches. Each church had one bishop who ruled the church in connection with the presbyters (elders). Some scholars believe that Ignatius planted the seeds of decline in the office of dea-

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con, by teaching that the bishops represented Christ, the elders represented the apostles, and the deacons were the servants of the bishops.¹ However, in other letters Ignatius spoke of the deacons as representing Christ, indicating that he did not intend to view the office of deacon as inferior to the others.²

Two interesting developments took place in the third century. First, the church added many other offices to the three spoken of in Scripture. One of these new offices was that of subdeacon. Because the seven deacons in the church at Rome were so busy, the city was divided into seven regions, with one deacon over each region and several subdeacons appointed to assist him. (Interestingly, the church did not think she could add to the number of deacons, because the apostles had appointed seven deacons in the church in Jerusalem; however, she had no problem adding to the number of offices in the church.) This proliferation of offices certainly paved the way for the hierarchy which would develop later. Second, of the seven deacons one came to be viewed as an archdeacon, who served as the bishop's personal assistant, and was often the bishop's successor. In these developments we can see more seeds of inequality in the offices. Still, the deacon was considered to be a very important person in the church. If there was any clear inequality among the offices at this time, it was that the diaconate was viewed as more prestigious an office than that of presbyter.

In the fourth century the decline of the office became more noticeable. One factor which contributed to this decline was the large growth of the church after Constantine legalized Christianity in 313. This large growth resulted in changes in the structure of the church, which changes took the form of a hierarchy with the bishop at the top. By 451 the bishops of the five major cities (Rome, Alex-

andria, Constantinople, Antioch, and Jerusalem) were considered patriarchs, and the patriarch of Rome was on his way to becoming the most important of the patriarchs.

Accompanying this change in structure was a redefining of the roles and duties of the various officebearers. With the growth of the church, the bishop could not possibly continue to be the pastor of all the people in his city, so he became the administrative head of the church in that city, while the presbyters became the heads of the various congregations within the city. The presbyters also took on more liturgical functions, and soon came to function as priests, whose work was to preside at the offering of the Eucharist. The deacons were viewed as the New Testament counterpart of the Levites, whose duties were largely to assist the priests. The office of deacon was therefore considered inferior to the priesthood in the New Testament church.

While in the first centuries the office of deacon was viewed as a permanent, lifelong office, it now came to be viewed as temporary, a stepping stone to that of the priesthood. Sometime between the fourth and eighth centuries, the church councils decided that the minimum age for deacons should be 25, and for presbyters (priests), 30. A person could be an "assistant priest" for five years as a deacon, then "graduate" to the priesthood. The church considered this "graduation" to be the good degree of which I Timothy 3:13 speaks: "For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree...."

By the eighth century, any seeds of disparity in the offices had become fully grown plants. The office of deacon, though still an important office in the church, was assumed to be inferior to that of priest and bishop.

With this disparity in the of-

fices came a change in the duties ascribed to the office of deacon.

For several hundred years after its institution, the diaconate continued to care for the poor. That this was still considered to be their duty in the second century is evident from writings of the church fathers, who repeatedly called the deacons to be responsible stewards of the money they collected. DeJong speaks of the work of the diaconate in the early third century, as he gleans it from the *Book of Clement*.

Because of the unusual situation created by persecution and the large number of poor in the churches the diaconate required all the time and energies of its incumbents.... To their care were allotted all the sick and the strangers; likewise were they to aid the widows and act as fathers to the orphans. Of all their labors they were to render an account to the congregation. Nor were they to wait until the poor solicited their help, but as worthy representatives of their office they were to go through the city seeking everywhere to help the sick and suffering and to provide the poor with the necessities of life.³

By the fourth century the bishops had taken ultimate responsibility for the care of the poor, though the deacons assisted them. At the time of Constantine (321), the deacons were responsible, under the bishop's supervision, for all the finances and property of the church — for the church had become heir of great estates and sums of money. From these funds the poor were cared for. Eventually, however, this work was completely taken from the deacons. By 692 a church council distinguished be-

1. Peter Y. DeJong, *The Ministry of Mercy for Today* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1952), page 46.

2. James Monroe Barnett, *The Diaconate: A Full and Equal Order* (Valley Forge, Pennsylvania: Trinity Press International, 1995), pages 51-52.

3. P. Y. DeJong, *op. cit.*, page 47.

tween the work of the seven men spoken of in Acts 6, whose work was clearly the care of the poor, and the work of the deacons of the church. The care of the poor now fell to the monasteries and religious orders. In addition, voluntary poverty was encouraged and considered meritorious.

What, then, did the deacons do? What other responsibilities were assigned to them, which took them away from their most important work?

First, they were assigned many liturgical responsibilities — responsibilities in the area of worship. Early in the second century, they were allowed to assist the bishops at the Lord's table. After the bishop had given thanks, the deacons were to distribute the bread and wine to those present, and bring those elements to those who were not present. As time went on, they were also charged with caring for the altar, and bringing the bread and wine (which the people brought as an offering) to the altar. By the middle of the third century they were to ensure that, before the Eucharist was offered, the catechumens were dismissed. They were then to ask the congregation whether any of them had anything against his brother or sister, so that the sacrament might be administered rightly. Later they were even allowed to administer the Eucharist when a bishop could not be present, but with his permission. This latter task, however, was taken from them in 314.

In other areas of liturgical duty, the deacons were assigned in the fourth century to announce the next part of worship (the people did not have bulletins on which the order of worship was printed), and to read the Gospel and Epistle lessons for the day. They were permitted to baptize if the bishop was absent and had given them permission. If the bishop was present, they were to assist him. They were entrusted with keeping the entire service and congregation in order.

They served as ushers, and "prevented whispering, sleeping, and disruption."⁴ This is but a partial list of their liturgical responsibilities.

Second, they served in many ways as the bishop's assistants — both pastorally and administratively. They could teach the catechumens, read a homily from the fathers if the bishop were not present (similar to our practice of reading sermons when a pastor is not present). They were charged with being his messenger, with representing him and voting in his place at church councils. They were to mingle with the people of the church, so that they could try to determine who was about to sin, and to see who were sick, bringing these people to the attention of the bishop and the church, so that the bishop could rebuke the sinners and the people could care for the sick. As the church grew and the bishops became busier, the deacons were the ones to whom the people were to come with their needs, so that the bishop would not be bothered.

The deacons were busy men, indeed, but they were not busy in the care of the poor. The office had lost its only legitimate function.

It stands to reason that, if the idea of the office changed, and the work assigned to the office changed, also the qualifications for the office would have to be modified. This did not however begin immediately. Early in the second century, the church father Polycarp set forth in a letter to the Philippians the requirements for the office of deacon. They are very similar to those given us in I Timothy 3. Later in that century, the diaconate was open only to those who were proved, exemplary in character, and brought up a family with children, this latter assuming, of course, that the deacon was married.

Especially the qualifications regarding the deacon's family life

were changed in the fourth and fifth centuries. At first, although it was permitted a deacon to be married, it was forbidden him to marry if he were single at his ordination, unless at that time he had requested of the bishop the right to marry. Furthermore, if a deacon's wife were to die, he was not allowed to remarry. Later, deacons who were married were expected to refrain from sexual relations. That this restriction could not be realistically enforced was seen when on occasion a deacon's wife would bear a child. To enforce this restriction, it was later expected of deacons and their wives that they separate at the time of the husband's ordination and both remain unmarried.

Thus the office degenerated also in this way, that the church imposed unnecessary, even wrong, restrictions on the men who held office. At the same time, she lost sight of the one great requirement for the deacons, that of compassion for those in distress.

Such was the sad deformation of the diaconate. As DeJong says, "Thus the church by the end of this period had completely transformed the office of the deacons and robbed it of its rightful place in the New Testament congregations."⁵ The diaconate was in need of reformation.

This history reminds us to be on our guard against the very real dangers of viewing the diaconate as inferior to the office of pastor or elder, of emphasizing other aspects of the work than that of caring for the poor, and of thinking that the qualifications set forth in Scripture need some updating. □

4. Jeannine E. Olson, *One Ministry, Many Roles: Deacons and Deaconesses through the Centuries* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1992), page 33.

5. P. Y. DeJong, *op. cit.*, page 50.

Called to the Cross

John 19:17-30

One day, Matthew, Mark, and Luke
confirm,
Simon, a man of Cyrene,
Came from the country
To Jerusalem.
Suddenly, soldiers!
They compel Simon to bear the
cross
The Savior will soon hang on and
die on.
Simon ... from the country.
Called to the city of God. *By God.*
Soiled man. Soil heart. *Prepared*
soil?
His way ... intersecting *via dolorosa!*
Compelled to bear *the* cross!
Follows Jesus.
Christian?

*

Others ...
Daughters of Jerusalem, weeping
for the wrong Person.
Two thieves, hanging, sheep and
goat.
Those that pass by, reviling.
Crucifiers, parting garments, cast-
ing lots for the coat.
Some, wondering if Elias will save
Him.
Prophecies fulfilling, knowing God
will save Him.
Darkness killing the Son...
Many called to the crucifixion of
the Christ.
One day. That good Friday.

*

We too. *The* called.
Called from sin and out of death.

Called to be with God and live.
How? *By God*, of course!
Who calls things that were not to
be.
How?
Hearing Christ crucified preached.
Not as many who hear
And cast cross and Christ
In their teeth.
But we
By grace of cross
Called!
So one day
Out of Adam's country
To Jerusalem,
To the Way,
To the Hill
Compelled,
Now willing,
Feeling in soul
More than flesh feels wood...
Christ the power of God, and
The wisdom of God!
To us
The called!

*

Following Jesus.
Giving to His back
A burden
We could not bear.
Casting crowns now
Before the Crucified King
Of our salvation.
Compelled (by love!)
To bear our cross
He gives (so light!).

*

Called now
To ponder anew
That Way,
Of our
Way,
That Death of our
Death,
That Life,
The Life of our
Life,
That Hope
(on this way of grief!)
Of the better country,
New Jerusalem!
Christian!

For Study, Meditation, & Discussion

1. The gospel accounts

What do the other gospel nar-
ratives say of the crucifixion of
Jesus (Matt. 27:32-49; Mark 15:20-
37; Luke 23:26-46)?

2. On the way to the Calvary

What is the significance of the
place to which Jesus was brought
to be crucified (cf. Heb. 13:11-13:
"without the camp," that is, out-

side Jerusalem)? Any significance
in the name of the place: Calvary,
Golgotha?

What do you think: Was the
Simon who bore the cross of Jesus
converted (compare Mark 15:21
with Rom. 16:13, Acts 11:20; 13:1)?

Those daughters of Jerusalem
who followed Jesus on His way to

be crucified (Luke 23:27ff.): Who were they? Why does Jesus tell them not to weep for Him but for themselves and their children? What is the interpretation of the puzzling statement, "For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry" (Luke 23:31)?

3. Death by crucifixion

Why did the Romans crucify certain criminals? Why did they crucify Jesus?

What is the significance of the crucifixion according to the counsel of God (cf. Gal. 3:10-13; Deut. 21:23)?

4. Between two malefactors, v.18

Using the various accounts, comment on the attitudes and behavior of the two thieves crucified with Jesus.

May we infer from Jesus' promise to the one thief that the souls of all God's people go to glory immediately after the death of the body? May we infer that the state of the elect soul immediately after death is *conscious* glory? Give proof. What does Jesus' promise to the dying thief tell us of *how* one is saved?

If a person born and baptized and raised in the church puts off repenting and believing on Jesus until his deathbed can he expect mercy?

What is the irony of the fact that Jesus was crucified "in the midst" of these two thieves?

5. The title, v.19

Pilate put a "title" on Jesus' cross, saying in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin: "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews." According to Matthew 27:37 this "title" was also Jesus' accusation. What was the meaning of all this, and why did the Jews protest?

6. The parting of the garments, vv. 23, 24

The soldiers who crucified Jesus, seeking to gain the whole world, or at least their rightful share of it, and while losing their very souls, divided Jesus' garments amongst themselves. Then they cast lots for Jesus' coat. What Scripture did this fulfill? What was the significance of this seemingly insignificant event?

7. The revilers

Many people came by the cross as people might go to the main event at a circus. They do not, however, come to admire His act, or to applaud His courage. Instead, they come to revile, to mock, to challenge. What do they say? Why?

8. The darkness

After three hours on the cross, at about noon, there was a darkness over all the earth (cf. Luke 23:44, 45). What sermon does the darkness preach?

9. The Seven Cross Words

From the different gospel narratives, be able to list in order the seven different sayings Jesus uttered while He was on the cross. Consider and discuss the meaning of these last words of the Savior.

10. The significance of the cross

The Bible teaches everywhere that the cross of Jesus Christ is the salvation of the church. Consider and discuss the following:

Ten Old Testament and ten New Testament passages which speak of the cross.

Creedal statements of the significance of the cross (cf. Heidelberg Catechism: LD 15, 16; Belgic Confession, Art. 21; Canons of Dordt, Head IIA, Arts. 3, 4; Westminster Confession, Chapter 8, Arts. 4-6).

Errors which contradict the

work and gospel of the cross.

Doctrines and Reformed terminology: Atonement. Reconciliation. Redemption. Propitiation. Substitution. Satisfaction of justice. Love. Limited scope. Infinite value. Other?

11. Cross in creation?

Is there revelation of the gospel of the cross in creation?

Do all have to be called to the cross and know about and believe in Jesus crucified for sin in order to be saved? Proof?

12. Perspective (John 20:31)

What does the crucifixion reveal of God's holiness? Of sin's sinfulness? Of Jesus' identity as God and as Man? Of Jesus' suffering? Of love?

How do most people react to the cross of Christ today?

What is it to take up our cross and follow Jesus (cf. Matt. 16:24)?

How do we, as Christians and Christian churches, show that we are witnesses of the glory and saving power of the cross (I Cor. 1:21ff.; Gal. 6:14)?

*

Believe.
Students of the Word.
Soldiers of the cross.
Ponder.
Word of the cross!
Holy grace.
Thrice holy God of grace
In Jesus Christ and cross
Revealed!
And you ...
Called...!
To the cross!
From the cross!
Into the world!
Onward to heaven!
Christian! □

Signs of the Times (5)

Believers Shall Be Persecuted

Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.

Matthew 24:9, 10

Jesus had spoken of signs of His coming in the church, in the world, and in nature. He had spoken of false Christs, of wars and rumors of war, of famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in divers places. These are the foreshadowing of Christ's return, the travail or birth pangs that serve to bring forth the new creation.

Many of these are obvious signs of judgment. They plainly show that this present dispensation is not "a period of grace" in the sense that God postpones judgment until Christ returns. God does not love sinners as sinners, nor does He show His favor to them, but He is angry with the wicked every day. He visits sin with His righteous judgments, which are God's just condemnation of the wicked, but which in the meantime serve as chastisement and blessing for His people.

That does not mean that the members of God's church do not suffer in the midst of these judgments. Jesus warns His disciples and us that there will be persecutions, defections, and deceptions. That occurred already in the old dispensation, as is evident from Hebrews 11:35-38. Our faith,

which is more precious than gold, is tried as by fire. Persecution has characterized this present dispensation and will greatly increase in frequency and intensity as the end approaches.

Jesus states, "They will deliver you up to be afflicted." The word for afflicted means "to be pressed." It reminds us of a serpent that tightens its coil about a victim until it has gradually crushed him to death.

Little did the disciples realize how soon this warning would become a reality in their own lives. Shortly after Jesus ascended to heaven, when Peter and John were in the temple witnessing of the resurrected Christ, the chief priest and Sadducees laid hands on them and put them in hold. The next day they were released, but not without being warned that they should no more speak of Jesus as the Christ.

It was only a short time later that all the apostles were cast into prison by the enraged sect of the Sadducees for preaching and performing miracles in the name of Jesus. Even the fact that an angel delivered them from the prison did not deter these enemies from warning them to speak no more in that name.

Wherever Paul went on his missionary journeys he was met with opposition, often from his own people, the Jews. He informs us: "Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned ..., In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the hea-

then, in perils in the city, ... in perils among false brethren" (II Cor. 11:24-26).

It was also soon after Pentecost that the first martyr gave his life for the cause of the gospel. Stephen was stoned even while he testified that he was bearing the reproach of his Lord. His final statements were similar to the words spoken by Jesus from the cross. Soon after the death of Stephen, James the brother of John was also killed. And it was Herod's intention to kill Peter also, but an angel delivered Peter from prison on the very eve of the intended execution. Some time later both Paul and Peter gave up their lives for the cause of Christ.

Since that time, history is replete with accounts of the sufferings of the martyrs, some of whom wasted away in prison, while others were burned at the stake, hanged on the gallows, or killed with the sword. Many had to flee for their lives, go into hiding, and thus offer up their lives for the truth they cherished.

We speak of the heroes of faith of the old dispensation, but another list could well be drawn up of the witnesses of faith in more recent times. The truth of God's sovereignty has always been challenged and denied. God's double predestination, sovereign providence, a unilateral and unconditional covenant, and particular grace meet opposition wherever these truths are proclaimed. All emphasis is placed upon a loving God, while God's justice is denied. Even eternal punishment in hell is being denied. Ultimately the conclusion of a universal salvation must be

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reached. Even unbelievers have always liked to speak of a bright and pleasant future for those who have departed from this life.



Jesus added: "And ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake."

The real cause for the hatred of the nations against the true church is the name of Jesus. That name represents Christ's person, just as we are always associated with our own names. If anyone mentions your name he is either speaking about you or to you. The same applies to the Jesus of the Scriptures. But this name also represents all that He stands for. Everyone, with the exception of the true believer, rejects all that Jesus teaches, that is, the message of the gospel, the Scripture in its entirety.

Paul accused the dissenters in Galatia of following another gospel which is not another. Many profess to believe in and preach Jesus, but, under the pretense of preaching Jesus, the only name under heaven whereby we can be saved, they preach and profess a false Jesus. The truth of the Scriptures is always under attack, and those who maintain it are hated and despised for the simple reason that the God and the Jesus of the Scriptures are hated and rejected.

Paul warns Timothy: "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron" (I Tim. 4:1, 2).

Jesus also warns us: "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you" (John 15:18, 19).

Anyone who maintains the sovereignty of God in our day is

branded narrow minded, bigoted, and quaint, and even rejected. Man receives the emphasis rather than God. Anyone who maintains the truth of the Word of God must expect that he will be a pariah, an outcast in the modern church world.



It is exactly for that reason that "then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another."

Paul writes in II Timothy 3:1-5: "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those who are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away."

It is not all Israel that is called Israel. The term "Christianity" is a very large umbrella that covers a host of people. Many profess to be Christians, disciples of Jesus, but deny Him in their confession and walk. Many belong to a certain church and engage in its activities with various ulterior motives. As long as their "faith" is not challenged, they feel perfectly at home and are perfectly content there.

But when their faith is put to a test, they are offended. The word literally means "to be trapped." They are in a bind, and they prove that their faith is a mere pretense rather than conviction. Money, goods, position, honor, family, and friends are preferred instead of the Christ. Sometimes a boy or girl friend may gain the preference. Often it is a lack of courage to stand up for the truth and bear the sacrifice that is involved.

These nominal Christians frequently become the strongest opponents of the truth.

Our Lord warns us: "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household" (Matt. 10:34-36).

As you know, that is exactly what happened to the Jews and even to many Christians in the Netherlands during World War II. Friends and neighbors, and sometimes members of the family, would cooperate with the Nazis and betray their relatives and neighbors. This resulted in constant harassment and persecutions of various sorts, but also in people being sent to a concentration camp, or even killed. The atrocities of that war demonstrate to us what we as true believers can expect, especially in the last days.

Thereby the church will be purified. Beyond a shadow of doubt no one will want to experience such fiery trials unless it be for his strong conviction of love for the truth. Jesus asks: "When the Son of man cometh, will He find faith on the earth?"

As cross bearers after Christ we bear His reproach outside the camp. Therefore we are called to be strong in our conviction, patient in tribulation. Peter speaks of the incorruptible and undefiled inheritance that is laid away for us in heaven and adds: "Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (II Pet. 1:6, 7). Then God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes.

In the sermon on the mount, Jesus teaches us: "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all

manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were be-

fore you" (Matt. 5:11, 12).

Sincere hope is perseverance. That hope maketh not ashamed, for the love of God is spread abroad in our hearts by His Spirit.

"He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son" (Rev. 21:7). The Lord stands at the door! □

Report of Classis West

March 3, 1999
at Redlands, California

The March meeting of Classis West was held at Hope Protestant Reformed Church in Redlands, California on March 3.

An officebearers' conference was held the day before. The theme of the conference was "The Doctrines of Sovereign Predestination." Not only was the conference attended by the delegates of classis, but by several members of our Redlands congregation and numerous visitors. Rev. Richard Moore gave the keynote address, the theme of which was "Predestination: The Heart of the Gospel." Several pastors also presented papers on the general theme of the conference. There was healthy discussion throughout the day, with many visitors participating freely.

Tuesday night the Redlands congregation hosted an evening of fellowship at the church. Rev. Moore, who is preparing to move to the mission field in Ghana, spoke for a brief time Tuesday night concerning that calling and his preparations for those labors, also seeking the support and prayers of the churches for that work.

Rev. Richard Smit chaired the meeting of classis on Wednesday.

Classis West had a full agenda.

The agenda included a request from South Holland Protestant Reformed Church that classis approve the organization of a new daughter congregation in northwest Indiana. Making the request were 31 signatories from South Holland PRC, representing 25 families consisting of 102 souls. Classis West, together with the synodical depu-

ties from Classis East, gave approval to this request. South Holland's council is to oversee the organization.

Classis also gave approval to Rev. Gise VanBaren's emeritation request and forwarded his request to synod for its approval. After nearly 43 years of faithful labors in the ministry of the Word and sacraments in the Protestant Reformed Churches, Rev. VanBaren will retire from the active ministry at the end of August, the Lord willing.

Loveland Protestant Reformed Church brought a supplemental report to classis, informing the delegates that it had just received a letter from Rev. Jon Smith, which informed them that he had not received any of several letters that had been sent him by Loveland since last September. Classis decided to continue Loveland's mandate as given by Classis West last September, that they work with Rev. Smith toward the removal of all offenses committed in his departure from our churches several years ago, and to determine to what extent he seeks to be reconciled to the PRC.

Classis dealt with three matters in closed session. The first was a protest against a decision taken by classis last September in an ongoing discipline case. The protest was rejected, and the decision of the previous classis upheld. Classis also rejected an appeal which was illegally brought to classis, not having fulfilled the requirements of Article 30 of the Church Order. The appellant, who claimed a grievance against his consistory, did not notify his consistory of the grievance before attempting to bring the matter to

classis. The third matter which classis treated in closed session involved a protest which classis rejected as illegal because of the improper involvement of an outside party in the case. A man claiming to be the "advocate" of another was found to be improperly involved in the case, having no right to the confidential material of the case. In connection with this matter, classis determined that "Article 31 of the Church Order gives a brother the right to personally protest a decision. It does not give another brother the right to protest for him." In addition, classis upheld that which has long been recognized in Reformed church government, namely, that if a man finds himself incapable of protesting his own case, and desires an advocate or "mond" (Dutch for "mouth") to help him present his case, he must request that of his consistory. "The church itself (whether consistory or major assembly) must make a decision to recognize, appoint or authorize a 'mond,' and such a request for a 'mond' must originate either with the appellant or by suggestion of the church."

Among other business conducted, classis approved subsidy requests from four congregations and forwarded them to synod. Classical appointments were granted to Hull PRC as follows: Pastors Key (March 21 and 28), Houck (April 18 and 25), Bekkering (May 2 and 9), denHartog (June 20 and 27), R. Miersma (July 11 and 18), Joostens (August 22 and 29), and Smit (September 12 and 19).

Annual elections were also held. Elected as delegates to synod 1999 were **Ministers:** *Primi:* W. Bekkering, A. denHartog, C. Haak, R. Smit, G. VanBaren; *Secundi:* A.

Brummel, M. DeVries, S. Houck, D. Kleyn, R. Miersma. **Elders:** *Primi:* Al Brummel (Edgerton), Henry Hoekstra (Hull), Jack Lenting (South Holland), James Regnerus (Doon), Chuck VanMeeteren (Redlands); *Secundi:* Jim Andringa (Hull), Melvin DeBoer (South Holland), John Mantel (Doon), Menno Poortenga (Peace), Bill Roetci-

soender (Lynden).

Among other elections: Rev. A. Brummel was elected to a three-year term as a synodical deputy from Classis West. Revs. den Hartog and Haak were elected as church visitors, with Revs. Bekkering and Houck as alternates. Rev. S. Key was reappointed to an-

other three-year term as stated clerk.

Classis West accepted the invitation of South Holland PRC to host the next meeting of classis on September 1, 1999. The March 2000 meeting is scheduled to be hosted by Bethel PRC.

Rev. Steven Key,
Stated Clerk □

News From Our Churches

Evangelism Activities

The Evangelism Committee of the South Holland, IL PRC recently asked their congregation for some help. It seems they want to provide complimentary *Standard Bearer* subscriptions for offices, waiting rooms, libraries, etc. where the magazine can be displayed and read by waiting patients or customers. Any congregation member who works in or knows of such an office or waiting room that would be willing to display the periodical was asked to contact the committee.

Rev. C. Haak, pastor of the Bethel PRC in Roselle, IL, recently was heard on Family Radio, WSCH 9.19 FM in Chicago, IL, speaking three times each day for a week for a program entitled, "The Pastor's Study." He spoke on the subject, "Biblical Priorities."

A March bulletin from the First PRC in Holland, MI included news that their Evangelism Society had just received several hundred copies of a Spanish translation of the RFPA book *Whosoever Will*, by Herman Hoeksema. The Spanish title is *Todo El Que Quira*. The book was translated by Emilio Monjo, pastor of the Presbyterian Reformed Church in Seville, Spain. This is the 2nd edition, the first having been published in 1989. These copies were sent as a gift, and First plans to promote this new addition to their Spanish literature.

Friday, March 19, the Evangelism Committee of the Randolph, WI PRC sponsored a lecture at the Second CRC

in Randolph. Prof. D. Engelsma spoke on "The Return of Christ and Y2K."

The Byron Center, MI PRC hosted two classes for their community and congregation on the topic of "Infant Baptism." Their pastor, Rev. Doug Kuiper, led the first class February 11, followed by another on February 25 with Prof. H. Hanko leading.

Young Adults' Activities

The week of March 7 the Young Adults of the Loveland, CO PRC again served as the host society for what has become an annual Young Adults' Retreat. This year's retreat took an in-depth look at Revelation 2:4 under the theme, "Our First Love." Loveland's pastor, Rev. G. VanBaren, spoke first, giving an explanation of that verse. He was followed by Prof. H. Hanko, who spoke on "Losing Our First Love." As in past years, the retreat was held at the Covenant Heights Convention Center in the Rockies, in the shadow of Long's Peak, part of Rocky Mountain National Park.

In addition to the two speeches, the young adults also took part in discussion groups on role models, and in two debates, one on the subject of birth control and the other on speaking in tongues.

Also included were physical activities such as, snow-shoeing, volleyball, bowling, and climbing Twin Sisters' Mountain. It appears that Loveland has hit upon a successful retreat for our denomination's young adults. This year nearly 60 attended, some of them for their second or third time. In fact, one individual attending for the first time this year told me that he plans to go back next year even if the dates do not correspond with his spring break. Loveland must be doing something right.

Mr. Benjamin Wigger

Congregation Activities

Past "Church News" have included updates on the building progress of Bethel PRC in Roselle, IL. With each issue you may have noticed a progression towards completion. Well, now we are happy and thankful to report that, in God's great goodness, Bethel has been granted an occupancy permit for their new church building. Plans called for the congregation to hold their first service in their own sanctuary on Sunday, March 21.

It is indeed the Lord's faithfulness to them that they are now able to leave the Holiday Inn, where they worshiped for the last four years, and gather together as the body of Christ in faith, hope, and love in their own sanctuary. Dedication of their church building was planned for April 9.

We also give thanks for the continued growth of our many churches. Especially now we are thinking of the South Holland, IL PRC. Their continued growth enables them to have a hand in another daughter congregation being born. There are still some details that the steering committee for the new congregation is working on, including finding a suitable place to worship and securing pulpit supply. South Holland's council will soon present nominations for officebearers for the new congregation, to be drawn from the 24 families and 4 individuals who signed on to be part of this new church. As they move closer to organization we will provide additional information to keep you updated on the progress of the efforts to establish a PRC in northwest Indiana.

Mission Activities

Rev. R. Moore, our recently installed missionary to Ghana,

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

preached his farewell sermon to his congregation of nearly 14 years in Hull, IA, on March 7. He chose for his text that afternoon Deuteronomy 31:7, 8, under the theme, "God Goes Before Us." Then about two weeks later, as indicated above, on March 19, he was installed as missionary. I am sure our readers will agree when we add, may the Lord bless Rev. Moore and his wife as they prepare to leave and serve as our missionary to Ghana.

Food For Thought

"Our Lord has written the promise of the resurrection not in book alone, but in every leaf in springtime."
— Martin Luther □

ANNOUNCEMENTS

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On April 19, 1999, our parents, **DOWIE and DELIA VanDer SCHAAF**, will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary. In gratitude to God for His faithfulness shown us in the blessing of a covenant home, we thank our parents for years of godly instruction in word and in deed, and pray that our heavenly Father will continue to uphold them and keep them ever in His care, for "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:20).

* Peter and Dorothy VanDer Schaaf
Eric and Jessica VanDyke, Aaron Spencer
Delia, Katie, Dowie, Audrey, Sara, Susan,
and Thomas

* Gary and Karen VanDer Schaaf
Joel, Alex, Glen, and Anna

Hudsonville, Michigan

NOTICE!!!

Classis East will meet in regular session on Wednesday, May 12, 1999 at Grace Protestant Reformed Church. Material to be treated at this session must be in the hands of the stated clerk by April 15, 1999.

Jon J. Huisken,
Stated Clerk



*The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance
and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot. The
lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea I
have a goodly heritage.*

Psalms 16:5, 6

Thankful to God for the guidance and goodness He has given to our churches over the past 75 years, the Protestant Reformed Churches are celebrating their 75th Anniversary, with a celebration to be held, D.V., at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan from June 19-23, 2000. The campus of Calvin College has been reserved for this family event where most of our activities will take place, including our lodging. Everyone is cordially invited to attend this wonderful event.

The theme for the 75th Anniversary Celebration is "Living Out of Our Heritage" and is based on the above verses. There are three speeches scheduled during the week, on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday evenings. Rev. Jason Kortering will speak on "A Beautiful Heritage," Prof. David Engelsma on "A Present Necessity," and Rev. Carl Haak on "A Sure Light For the Future." There are many activities planned for each of the days. We anticipate a typical day at the celebration to consist of the following:

8:30 - 9:30	Breakfast	1:00-4:30	Different activities each day, including: Family Fun Day, Field Day, Tours of Historical Protestant Reformed Churches, visiting local museums and planetariums, sports activities, and many more unstructured activities and free time.
10:00-11:30	Children's Bible School	5:00-6:00	Dinner
	Adult discussion and sectionals, including information on various missionary fields and activities of the Protestant Reformed Churches	7:00-9:00	Speeches, Discussion, Fellowship Time
11:30-1:00	Lunch		

We appreciate your continued support for this event. In the upcoming months you will be receiving additional information on the celebration regarding costs, how to arrange your reservations, and other pertinent matters. We will also be conducting a finance drive with the intention of lowering the registration cost of the celebration so that it will be affordable to everyone.

The event is being planned so that it will be enjoyable for all ages, and in such a way that there is something for everyone, by having many different types of activities planned throughout the week. We anticipate a large turnout for this family event, and we look forward to a time of fellowship with family and fellow believers. Mark your calendars now to spend June 19-23, in the year 2000, at this *celebration of thanksgiving to God!*

The Promotion Committee

NOTICE!!

Bethel PRC is now worshipping in their own church sanctuary. Address:
115 Prat Blvd.
Roselle, IL 60172
Phone: (630) 307-9402

See our web page for directions: www.mcs.net/~bethelprc. Services: 9:30 AM and 5 PM. Visitors please take note! We rejoice in this gift which our faithful covenant Father has given us. "LORD, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth" (Psalm 26:8).

TEACHER NEEDED

Hope Christian School of Redlands, CA is in need of a teacher for the intermediate grades (3 & 4) for the 1999-2000 school year. The grade assignment, however, is flexible, with the possibility instead for an elementary position (grades 1 & 2). Interested persons are encouraged to send an application to Hope Christian School, Attn: Ed Karsemeyer, 1309 E. Brockton Ave., Redlands, CA 92374. You may also phone school, (909-793-4584), Bill Feenstra (909-793-3597), or Mike Gritters (909-793-4439).