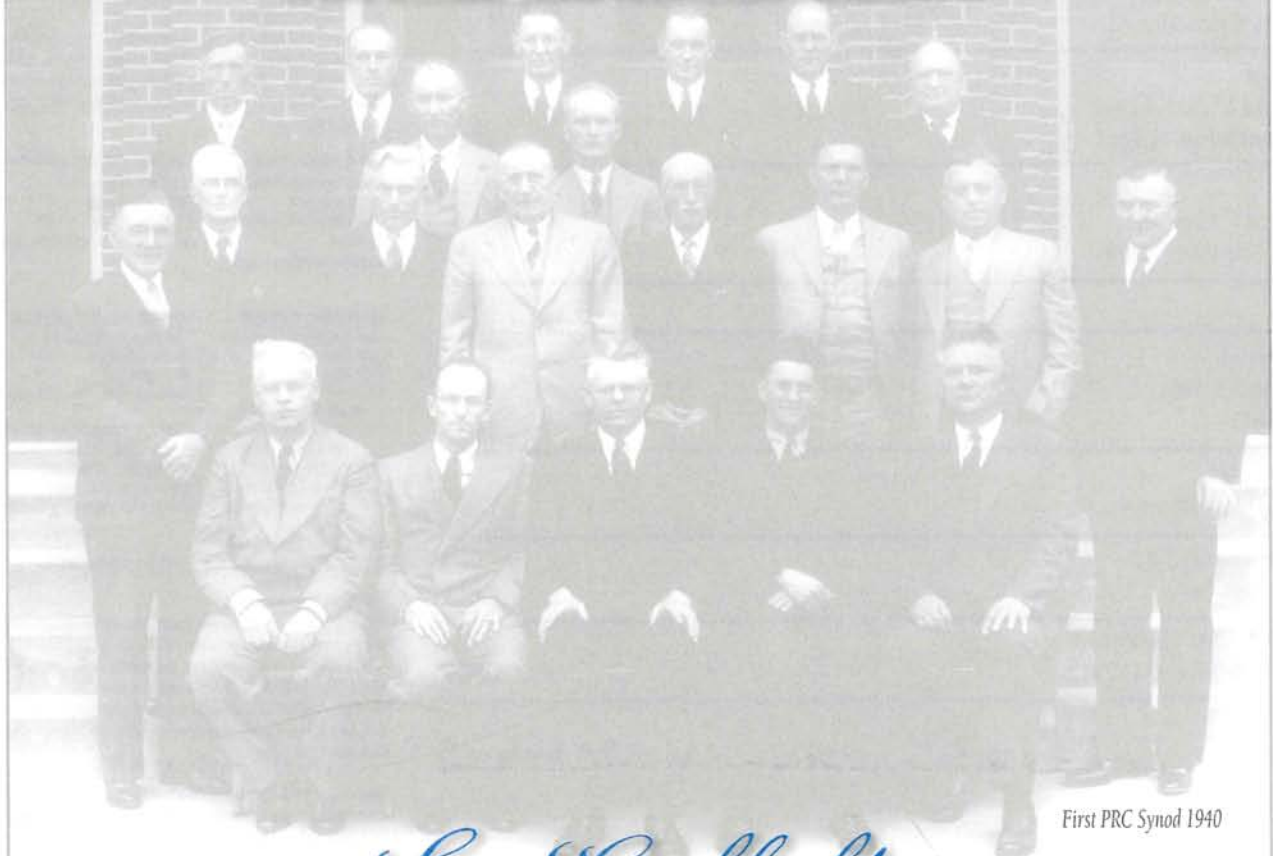


THE *July 2000* STANDARD BEARER

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE



First PRC Synod 1940

PRC *Synod Highlights* 2000



VOLUME 76 • NUMBER 18



Editorially Speaking	410
Meditation Rev. Ronald L. Cammenga <i>The Memorial at Gilgal</i>	411
Editorial Prof. David J. Engelsma <i>Synod of the PRC, 2000</i>	414
Letters	416
Special Article Rev. Richard J. Smit <i>"Akwaaba"</i>	423
All Around Us Rev. Gise J. VanBaren	426
Report of Classis East Mr. Jon J. Huiskens	429
News From Our Churches Mr. Benjamin Wigger	429

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.

REPRINT POLICY

Permission is hereby granted for the reprinting of articles in our magazine by other publications, provided: a) that such reprinted articles are reproduced in full; b) that proper acknowledgment is made; c) that a copy of the periodical in which such reprint appears is sent to our editorial office.

EDITORIAL POLICY

Every editor is solely responsible for the contents of his own articles. Contributions of general interest from our readers and questions for The Reader Asks department are welcome. Contributions will be limited to approximately 300 words and must be signed.

EDITORIAL OFFICE

Prof. David J. Engelsma
4949 Ivanrest
Grandville, MI 49418
(e-mail: engelsma@prca.org)

CHURCH NEWS EDITOR

Mr. Ben Wigger
6597 40th Ave.
Hudsonville, MI 49426
(e-mail: benwig@juno.com)

BUSINESS OFFICE

The Standard Bearer
Don Doezeema
P.O. Box 603
Grandville, MI
49468-0603
PH: (616) 531-1490
(616) 538-1778
FAX: (616) 531-3033
(e-mail: doezeema@prca.org)

NEW ZEALAND OFFICE

The Standard Bearer
c/o B. VanHerik
66 Fraser St.
Wainuiomata, New Zealand

UNITED KINGDOM OFFICE

c/o Mr. Sean Courtney
78 Millfield, Grove Rd.
Ballymena, Co. Antrim
BT43 6PD Northern Ireland

SUBSCRIPTION PRICE

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

ADVERTISING POLICY

The Standard Bearer does not accept commercial advertising of any kind. Announcements of church and school events, anniversaries, obituaries, and sympathy resolutions will be placed for a \$10.00 fee. These should be sent to the Business Office and should be accompanied by the \$10.00 fee. Deadline for announcements is at least one month prior to publication date.

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

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


Website for PRCA: www.prca.org

Editorially Speaking ...

As is our custom, we devote much of the July issue of the *Standard Bearer* to the annual synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches. This issue contains a report of most of the more important decisions of synod (the editorial), the text of the sermon preached at the pre-synodical service (as the

meditation), pictures (by Don Doezeema) of synod at work and at coffee, the official greetings of synod by the Covenant Protestant Reformed Church in Northern Ireland and by the Evangelical Reformed Churches in Singapore, and a report on foreign missions by the secretary of the Foreign Mission Committee.

The cover design is by Jeff Steenholdt.

We will devote the next issue of the SB to our thrilling celebration of the 75th anniversary of the Protestant Reformed Churches, just finished. 

— DJE

The Memorial at Gilgal

The events recorded in our text occurred at an important juncture in the history of Old Testament Israel. For forty years Israel had wandered in the wilderness. There were reasons for Israel's forty years of confinement in the wilderness. The main reason, of course, was Israel's rebellion against God and refusal to enter the land at Kadesh-Barnea. In unbelief the people had listened to the evil report of the ten spies. Because of that unbelief, God had not permitted Israel to enter the promised land but had made them wander for forty years in the wilderness. During that time everyone twenty years of age and older, with the exception of Joshua and Caleb, had died.

Another reason for the forty years of wandering was that the Canaanites' cup of iniquity was not yet full. Now, forty years later, their cup of iniquity is full. They are ripe for the judgment of God.

Still another reason for the wilderness wandering was the preparation of the future generation to enter into and to conquer the promised land. This was a whole generation that did not know or were too young to remember God's wonderful deliverance of Israel out of Egypt. Through the rigors of the wilderness wandering, they were prepared for the conquest of Canaan. They saw the wonders of God. They experienced firsthand God's care of His people. For forty years God had daily provided them

with the manna, as well as water from the rock. We read in Deuteronomy 29:5 that at the end of the forty years their clothes had not waxed old nor had their shoes worn out.

But now God had brought them into the land of Canaan. By a mighty miracle He had divided the waters of the Jordan River. The entire nation had passed over the Jordan on dry ground. They and their children were safely on the other shore, in Canaan at last.

God had been good to Israel! This goodness and grace of God must be remembered.

This is the will of God for His redeemed people. They must know, they must remember, and they must confess His goodness. They must live in the consciousness of God's goodness and grace. And they must proclaim God's goodness and grace to the entire world.

For this reason, the Lord gives instructions to Joshua for the erection of a memorial at Gilgal, on the western bank of the Jordan River.

A Reminder to Israel

We must not suppose that there were two memorials constructed. Verse 9 in our King James translation leaves that impression. It would be better that verse 9 read, "And Joshua set up twelve stones *that had been* in the midst of Jordan, in the place where the feet of the priests which bore the ark of the covenant *had* stood: and they are there unto this day." There was one memorial constructed, and that memorial was constructed on the western bank of the Jordan River at the place called Gilgal.

This memorial was to be con-

structed in a certain way. The Lord Himself gave the instructions for the construction of the memorial. It was to be constructed out of stone, twelve stones. Joshua was to designate twelve men, one out of each of the tribes of Israel. Each of those men was to take a stone out of the middle of the Jordan River. The stones were to come from the dry path that God had made through the river, out of the place where the priests' feet had stood firm in the river. They were to carry those twelve stones on their shoulders out of the dry riverbed onto the far shore. With those twelve stones the memorial at Gilgal was to be built.

The purpose of this heap of stones was that it should serve as a *memorial*, that is, a *reminder* to the children of Israel.

That is indicated by what we read in the passage. In the first part of verse 6 we read: "That this (that is, this heap of stones) may be a *sign* among you...." And at the end of verse 7 we read: "...and these stones shall be *for a memorial* unto the children of Israel for ever."

Of what were these stones to remind Israel? The memorial at Gilgal was to remind Israel of the grace of God. These stones were a monument to *grace*. They were to remind Israel of the goodness of God in bringing them into the promised land. The stones came out of the dry riverbed. They were a testimony to the goodness of God in saving His people, the goodness of God in making a way for His people where there was no way.

They were a testimony to *sovereign* grace. God did what no man

could do. By His almighty power and by His outstretched arm He brought Israel through the death and destruction of the waters of Jordan safely into the rest of Canaan.

The stones were a testimony to *undeserved* grace. Israel did not deserve this goodness of God. The forty years of wandering in the wilderness had demonstrated that. They were a rebellious and sinful people who did not deserve God's goodness in bringing them into Canaan. Although they did not deserve it, God in His grace brought them out of the wilderness, through the Jordan, and into the promised land.

The stones were a testimony to *particular* grace. The memorial was constructed of twelve stones. Of all the peoples of the earth, the twelve tribes of Israel alone were the people to whom God had been gracious.

And thus, the purpose of the memorial at Gilgal was to spur Israel on to grateful and holy living. Remembering the goodness and grace of God, Israel must live in the land to the praise of the God who had been so gracious to them. Out of gratitude they must live to the praise of His glorious name.

The memorial would serve this purpose because of the prominent place it would have in Israel. The memorial would have an almost constant presence among the people. In the whole first phase of the conquest of Canaan, Israel's base of operations was Gilgal. Every time the army went forth, it would depart from Gilgal. And every time they returned, they would return to Gilgal. The people would live, as it were, in the shadow of the memorial at Gilgal.

We learn something from this. What we learn is that the first and greatest threat to the apostasy of God's people does not come from false teachers outside of the church. That is a very real and constant threat. The false teachers must be exposed and God's people must be

warned against their pernicious errors. But false teachers are not the first and greatest threat to God's people.

Neither does the first and greatest threat to apostasy come from the influence of the wicked world on the church. Worldliness is a real threat and an ever-present danger. But it is not the greatest threat faced by the church.

The most serious threat to apostasy comes from God's people themselves, that God's people forget the great works of the Lord. That was true for Israel and that is true for us today. In fact, it may be said that forgetfulness of God's works is the first step towards apostasy. That is how apostasy always begins. The false teachers make their inroads, and worldliness is embraced because God's people have forgotten the wonderful works of God.

Before his death, Moses had warned Israel of this very thing. In Deuteronomy 8:11ff. he had said, "Beware that thou forget not the LORD thy God, in not keeping his commandments, and his judgments, and his statutes, which I command thee this day: Lest when thou hast eaten and art full ... thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the LORD thy God, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage...." That warning against forgetting the mighty works of God applies as much to us today as it applied to Israel in the Old Testament.

We do not have memorials of stone today like the memorial at Gilgal. But we do have memorials, memorials that remind us of the very same truths that the memorial at Gilgal was intended to remind Israel of: God's sovereign and particular grace, our unworthiness, and our calling in the light of God's grace to live thankful and holy lives.

What are those memorials?

One of those memorials is Holy Scripture, and the preaching and teaching of Holy Scripture. That

is the message of the Bible and the message of the preaching of the gospel. It is the message of grace, the free and sovereign grace of God in His Son, Jesus Christ. It is the message of particular grace. And it is the call to God's Israel today, in light of and out of that grace, to live in holiness to the praise of the grace of God.

Another of those memorials is the sacraments. The sacraments are memorials to the grace of God. The sacraments are especially powerful memorials because they are visible signs and seals of that grace of God.

Still another memorial is the confessions: our own Three Forms of Unity, the Westminster Standards, and the ancient and ecumenical creeds. That is the main purpose of the creeds: the defense of the free and sovereign grace of God in His Son, the divine Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Yet another memorial is the great works of God in the history of the church. A memorial is erected here to remind Israel of a great work of God in the history of His Old Testament church.

But those great works of God in history do not stop with the Old Testament church; they continue in the New Testament down to this very day. God raised up a memorial to His grace at Nicea in A.D. 325, a memorial to the truth that God's grace to His people is always in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. God raised up a memorial in His church in the fourth century through Augustine when Pelagius denied the grace of God in salvation. God raised up a memorial at the time of the great Reformation of the sixteenth century through men like Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, and Knox, after Rome had repudiated the grace of God and replaced it with the works and worth of man. God raised up a memorial at the synod of Dordt in 1618-19 over against the denial by the Arminians of the sovereign grace of God in salvation. He raised up a memo-

rial in the reformation known as the *Afscheiding* of 1834 in the Netherlands through men like DeCock and Brummelkamp and the rest. He raised up a memorial in the *Doleantie* of 1886 under Dr. Abraham Kuyper. He raised up a memorial in our own land at the time of the beginning of the Christian Reformed Church in 1857.

And He raised up a memorial in 1924, through Herman Hoeksema and Henry Danhof and George Ophoff. That was a memorial to grace, to sovereign, particular grace over against the general grace of the Three Points. In every church reformation, that centrally has been the issue. That was the issue in 1924. Then in 1953 God preserved the memorial to His grace among us when there were those who attempted to deface and vandalize the memorial.

Brothers of the synod of 2000 of the Protestant Reformed Churches, you are called to preserve the memorial at Gilgal. This is not simply the responsibility that the churches entrust to you, but this is the responsibility that God Himself gives you. This must be before your consciousness in all your deliberations and in every decision that you make. Preserve the memorial. See to it that the memorial is maintained.

Preserve Gilgal's memorial, the memorial to the sovereign grace of God: in the theological school of our churches, in the great work of missions, in the work of contact with other churches and denominations, and in the life of the churches.

A Means of Instruction to Future Generations

The purpose of the memorial at Gilgal, however, was not only that it should be a reminder to the present generation of the sovereign grace of God, but that it should also serve as a means of instruction to future generations.

This was an important reason for the erection of the memorial.

That is mentioned in verses 6 and 7 and again in verses 21-23. God has His eye on the up-and-coming generation. It is His will that they know His wonderful works and confess His sovereign grace. It is His will that the present generation teach the coming generation the wonderful works and sovereign grace of God.

The memorial at Gilgal, now, must serve this purpose: the children will see the memorial and will ask about the memorial. Then the father must take the time to answer their questions and to explain to them the mighty works of God and the grace of God shown to Israel.

This belongs to our calling today. This is the calling of the synod; this is the calling of every minister and every officebearer; this is the calling of covenant parents and grandparents.

In the carrying out of this calling, Israel proved herself unfaithful. We learn that from the Book of Judges (2:8-10). There arose a generation that knew not the Lord nor the mighty works that He had done for Israel. Significantly, when the angel of the Lord was sent to rebuke Israel for its unfaithfulness, Judges 2:1 informs us that the angel "came up from Gilgal."

The same thing is true today. Not only is there a general forgetfulness of the mighty works of God and a lack of teaching the sovereign grace of God to the children and young people of the church. But there are actually those (and that is worse) who are systematically dismantling the memorial at Gilgal. About the Holy Scriptures they are saying that it is a human book, time-bound, and culturally conditioned. About the church's confessions they are saying that they are outdated, irrelevant, and of no practical value for the church today. About the great events in church history they are saying that those squabbles of the past must be forgotten; for the most part they involved petty issues and were predominantly personality clashes.

The church must put these things behind her in the interests of ecumenicity and denominational unity.

The results today are the same as they were in Old Testament Israel. A generation has arisen that does not know the Lord or the mighty works that He has done, a generation that has forsaken the God of sovereign grace for the service of gods of this world.


For the sake of our children, for the sake of future generations, the memorial at Gilgal must be preserved.

A Witness to the World

But besides being a reminder to Israel and a means of instruction to future generations, the memorial at Gilgal was also to serve as a witness to the world at large.

That is verse 24. The purpose of the memorial did not end with the nation of Israel; but its purpose included "all the people of the earth." The same thing is true today. That is the glorious calling that God gives to the Protestant Reformed Churches. God calls us to proclaim and defend His greatness, His mighty works, and His sovereign grace to all the world. He calls us to do that in evangelism and in missions. By God's grace we are doing that. What a privilege that we may be used of God in this way.

In the case of the world at large, the church's witness to God's sovereign grace serves a twofold purpose. The first purpose of God is the salvation of the elect out of the nations. But it is also the purpose of God that by this witness of the church others will be hardened, left in their sin, and have their judgment before God aggravated.

May God keep up among us a faithful witness to Him and to His sovereign grace. May the memorial at Gilgal be preserved in our midst, for our salvation and the salvation of our children — but especially for the glory of His great name. Amen. 

Synod of the PRC, 2000

Synod 2000 of the Protestant Reformed Churches (PRC) met from June 13 through June 19 at the Georgetown PRC in Hudsonville, MI. Included were unusual sessions late into the evening on Friday and much of the day on Saturday. The reason was the necessity to finish the work before the beginning of the 75th anniversary celebration of the denomination on Monday evening, June 19. Synod made it with barely two hours to spare.

At the worship service that traditionally precedes the meeting of synod, Rev. R. Cammenga, president of last year's synod, preached on Joshua 4:1-9, 19-24, the memorial to God's grace at Gilgal.

Officers of the 2000 synod were Rev. B. Gritters (Hudsonville, MI), president; Rev. C. Haak (Bethel, IL), vice-president; Rev. C. Terpstra (Holland, MI), first clerk; and Rev. R. Smit (Doon, IA), second clerk.

Contact

Synod approved the implementation of a sister-church relationship with the Covenant Protestant Reformed Church in Northern Ireland (CPRC, NI). The CPRC, NI addressed synod by an official representative, Mr. Allister Pattison. The address thanked the PRC for the ministry of missionary Rev. R. Hanko and for the training of Mr. Angus Stewart in the Protestant Reformed Seminary. The complete text of the address is printed elsewhere in this issue of the *Standard Bearer*.

In view of the expiration of Rev. J. Kortering's term of labor in June, 2002, synod advised the council of Hope PRC, Walker, MI to call a minister to replace Rev. Kortering

as minister-on-loan to the Evangelical Reformed Churches in Singapore (ERCS). The intention is that a man will accept this call in time to work together with Rev. Kortering for a year before Rev. Kortering leaves Singapore. Rev. Kortering was present at synod and informed the delegates concerning his work with the ERCS, particularly the establishment of a theological school.

Rev. Chris Coleborn, moderator of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Australia (EPC) and official delegate from that Church with Rev. David Higgs, brought the greetings of the EPC. He conveyed the thanks of his church for the training of its seminarian, Mr. Mark Shand, in the Protestant Reformed Seminary.

The Contact Committee of the PRC informed synod of meetings with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, the United Reformed Churches in North America, and the Reformed Churches in South Africa. Contact with these churches will continue.

Domestic Missions

From its Domestic Mission Committee (DMC), synod heard reports of the work by missionary Rev. J. Mahtani in the Pittsburgh, PA area; the work by missionary Rev. T. Miersma in Spokane, WA; and the work by missionary Rev. R. Hanko in the United Kingdom.

Synod adopted a policy of confession of faith by converts on the mission field. Confession of faith may take place on the mission field when the work has developed to the point that there is "compelling reason" to believe that a congregation will be organized according to

the judgment of the missionary, the calling church, and the DMC. The budget for domestic missions in 2001 is nearly \$300,000.

Foreign Missions

The Foreign Mission Committee (FMC) reported on the work of Rev. R. Moore in Ghana, West Africa. Synod authorized the purchase of property in Ghana where the preaching services can be held.

The FMC sent a delegation consisting of Rev. D. Kleyn and Rev. R. Miersma to the Philippines in October, 1999. They met with various interested groups and persons, preached, and lectured. Synod directed the FMC to continue to labor in the Philippines through correspondence, literature, and visits with a view to the calling of a missionary to the Philippines, whether in 2001 or later. Two delegations will visit the Philippines before next year's synod. Synod adopted a budget for foreign missions in 2001 of \$100,500.

Theological School

The Theological School Committee reported that there were seven full-time students in the seminary this past year, including three who aspire to the ministry in the PRC. In addition, a number of men from other Reformed churches took courses at the seminary as special students. The faculty licensed two seminarians to speak a word of edification in the PRC, Mr. Rodney Kleyn and Mr. Angus Stewart. The rector, Prof. R. Decker, informed synod that the faculty has arranged an internship for seminarian Angus Stewart in the Hudsonville, MI PRC from July through December, 2000. The in-

ternship-program for fourth-year students in a congregation under the close supervision of an experienced pastor is a valuable aspect of the training of men for the ministry in the PRC.

Synod approved a partial sabbatical for Prof. Engelsma the coming school-year and a partial sabbatical for Prof. Decker during the 2001/2002 school year. Prof. Engelsma will work on an exposition of Old Testament history from the viewpoint of the covenant. Prof. Decker will develop a course on world religions. Both will teach a course during their sabbatical.

Synod declared Prof. H. Hanko emeritus as of January 1, 2001 because of age. Synod expressed its "thanks to God for Prof. Hanko's many years of service in the ministry of the Word in our churches and especially for his untiring labors in our seminary for the past thirty-five years. It is our prayer that the Lord will bless Prof. and Mrs. Hanko in his retirement and continue to use him in the cause of the gospel for many years to come."

The graduation exercises for Mr. Mark Shand were held on Thursday evening of the week of synod. The ceremony was attended by the members of the TSC,



*Mark and Susan Shand
with children:
Hannah, Samuel, Matthew, Phebe*

delegates to synod, faculty of the seminary, many members of the PRC in western Michigan, and the two delegates from the EPC, Rev. Chris Coleborn and Rev. David Higgs. Mr. Shand completed a three-year program at the seminary. He will return to Australia where he will seek the ministry in the EPC. Prof. Hanko spoke on "The Church and her Catholicity." The SB plans to publish this speech in a later issue. Rev. Higgs expressed appreciation to the PRC and their seminary for the training of Mr. Shand. On behalf of the EPC, Rev. Higgs presented six volumes containing the works of John Knox; the volume, *A Copious and Comprehensive Summary of the Laws and Regulations of the Church of Scotland, from A.D. 1560 to A.D. 1850*; and the volume, *Digest of Rules and Procedure of the Inferior Courts of the Free Church of Scotland*, to the Theological School of the PRC. The inscription with this valuable gift of books reads:

In deep gratitude for your care, instruction, training and love of Mr. Mark Shand, during the period of his study, from 1997 until 2000. We hope that you find John Knox's "Works" useful in gaining a greater understanding of Scottish Presbyterianism, from which foundation the Evangelical Presbyterian Church arises. Given in appreciation by the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Australia.

Church Order

Adopting the recommendations of its special committee, synod made a number of changes in the Church Order. The proposal to leave Article 69 (concerning what the churches sing at worship) unchanged occasioned discussion. The result was a decision of synod to refer the matter of possible revision of Article 69 back to the Church Order Study Committee for further study and recommendation to Synod 2001. Synod instructed the committee to "spell

out the biblical principles regarding singing in worship, the historical intent of Article 69, [and] our current practice, as well as the discussion and decisions made by our churches in 1960-62 *re* Article 69." Article 69 of the Church Order of the PRC reads:

In the churches only the 150 Psalms of David, the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, the Twelve Articles of Faith, the Songs of Mary, Zacharias, and Simeon, the Morning and Evening Hymns, and the Hymn of Prayer before the sermon shall be sung.

Emeritation

In connection with Article 13 of the Church Order, concerning support of retired ministers, synod 1999 decided that "payment from the EF [Emeritus Fund] continue to be on a 'needs' basis, but with the added provision that some amount up to a maximum limit be made available to retirees and/or their spouses upon request but with no questions asked." Synod set the amount at \$15,000. The intent of the decision of synod 1999 was to relieve the emeritus ministers and widows of disclosing their income, assets, and expenses on the "Form to Establish Need for Emeritus Financial Support" for requests which are not relatively large and are below the defined amount. The synodical Emeritus Committee (EC) protested this decision to synod 2000 on the ground that the decision of synod 1999 radically changed, indeed "destroyed," Article 13, which requires support of ministers in their "need." Synod rejected the protest of the EC contending that emeritation support continues on a needs-basis with the one provision of granting requests up to a defined limit without disclosure of assets and that "synod should trust the judgment of the emeritus ministers that they will submit requests based on need."

Protests and Appeals

Synod spent much time judg-

ing several protests and appeals. Most concerned discipline cases and, therefore, were treated in closed session. One was a protest against the decision of synod 1999 not to enter into a member's appeal. Synod 2000 rejected the protest on the ground that the case that was appealed to the 1999 synod had not been finished in the minor assembly.

75th Anniversary of the PRC

The special 75th Anniversary Steering Committee reported that all was in readiness for the celebration of the 75th anniversary of the PRC immediately following the sessions of synod. Synod adopted a resolution on behalf of all the churches thanking the members of the 75th Anniversary Committee and sub-committees "for the diligence they have shown in planning


this joyous celebration in the life of our churches." The Evangelical Reformed Churches in Singapore sent special anniversary greetings to the PRC. The letter of greeting stated that "as you count your blessings and name them one by one, there will certainly be those who will look upon you with envy and hatred. But do be assured there are also others, like us in the ERCS, who are much encouraged by your many examples of faithful and undaunted struggle for the truth, which make this day of great rejoicing possible." The complete text of the greeting is printed elsewhere in this issue.

Other Matters

Synod declared that it is appropriate for the PRC to receive gifts of life insurance, whether the denomination is named as beneficiary

or as owner of the policy. Ministers who opted out of the Social Security program were advised to consider the government's recent decision to allow them to re-enter the system so as to receive Medicare insurance when they reach the age of 65. Synod adopted a budget for denominational work in 2001 of \$1,252,407. The assessment for each family is \$741, the same as this year. Synod 2001 will meet at First PRC, Grand Rapids, God willing.

Members of the churches and other interested persons are encouraged to read the complete "Acts of Synod" when the book comes out later this summer.

May God bless the deliberations and decisions of the synod of the PRC unto the peace and witness of the churches. 

—DJE

Letters

■ Twanging Hearts

Your classification of instrumental accompaniment as an attending "circumstance" of worship where the church has liberty, rather than as an element of worship regulated by express command of Scripture, is erroneous (*Standard Bearer*, May 15, 2000, "Shall We Please God or [Certain Kinds of] People...?").

Instrumental accompaniment was introduced into the Old Covenant worship by (and *only* by) the express command of God. "And he (king Hezekiah) stationed the Levites in the house of the Lord with cymbals, with stringed instruments, and with harps, according to the commandment of David, of Gad the king's seer, and Nathan the prophet; for thus was the commandment of the Lord by his prophets" (II Chron. 29:25). This mandatory musical accompaniment was closely tied to the required animal sacrifices (II Chron. 29:27, 28). It would have been sinful for David to *introduce* musical instru-

ments into the worship of the tabernacle without the command of God, just as it would have been sinful for Hezekiah to *withhold* musical accompaniment during his restoration of temple worship.

Nor is instrumental accompaniment (rightly understood) optional in New Covenant worship. Paul commands that while singing we are *also* to be "making melody" in our hearts (Eph. 5:19). A very literal rendering of the original phrase is "plucking on the strings of your heart." We *must* accompany our voices with twanging hearts, so to speak.

Under the New Covenant *all* believers can finally and meaningfully sing Psalm 144:9, "on a harp of ten strings I will sing praise unto thee." We are no longer dependent on mediating Levites with their instruments making sound during a burnt offering. By virtue of the universal priesthood of believers, we now may and must "continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips giv-

ing thanks to his name" (Heb. 13:15).

While Scripture alone is our only infallible rule of faith and practice, the testimony of church history is corroboratory. The early church was unanimously opposed to the use of literal instruments in worship, and to this day the Eastern Orthodox churches practice a cappella ("as in the chapel") singing. It is not clear from history when the Roman Church introduced instruments. Some sources claim the practice began as early as AD 666 under Pope Vitalian, although Aquinas (c. AD 1250) writes as if a cappella singing was yet the norm. You surely do not mean to imply that the proper biblical position on this issue was uncovered by the Roman Church, just as she was descending into the Dark Ages.

Also, your justification for the "optional" position ("if only the instrument serves the singing of the congregation!") is the same argument the Romanists use to justify incense and candles accompanying prayer. Calvin's logic in linking and rejecting these two

"aids" to worship is impeccable.

Renwick B. Adams
Clarinda, IA

■ Proper Use of the Creeds

I read with keen interest the letter, "Baptism by Women," by J.L. Reckman and your reply (*Standard Bearer*, May 1, 2000). May I make so bold as to suggest that you are both wrong.

Mr. Reckman's position is based on a failure to imbibe the whole doctrine of Scripture. This becomes plain as one reads the letter. So many passages from the New Testament flow through the mind contemporaneous with the reading as to refute the ideas presented conclusively the nearer one gets to the end of the letter.

But I believe you were wrong in answering Mr. Reckman's notions from the confessional position of the Reformed church. It is axiomatic to religious liberty that one is free to disagree with a confession if he feels it does not faithfully represent the teaching of Scripture. Men and women have died for this liberty of conscience in times past against a corrupt Church of England and the Roman Institution (you can't call the latter a church). *De facto*, an answer based on creeds is inadequate to convince. Why is it necessary in order to maintain the doctrinal purity of the church to appeal to uninspired creedalism to refute propositions which fundamentally are at odds with the inscripturated Word? Would it not have been more to the point (and tellingly so) to have answered the propositions espoused in Mr. Reckman's letter by applying Scripture to them? Thus the matter would be grounded on a much sounder footing. If the answers given from this source are rejected, then it is the Scripture which is denied and not the uninspired words of men. No matter how good those men were when they compiled creeds, they were not gifted with inspiration. The biblical writers were. This is not to say that creeds have no value. They do, but in establishing the doctrine of the Scripture, Scripture alone, and unsupported (it doesn't need

support from men, no matter how good they are), must have unrestrained free course.

It is one of the criticisms frequently leveled at covenant theologians: they make too much of their confessions. The risk is run of appearing to have an incomplete revelation, at best — one which needs bolstering up by creeds. This position has been criticized as creedalism *contra* Scripture. That criticism may be a bit strong, but God forbid there is truth in it! The Westminster Shorter Catechism makes a beautiful statement: "The Word of God, which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy Him." If this is not true, then we are of all men the most miserable. In answer to Mr. Reckman, Scripture (*sola Scriptura*) would have provided the element of incontrovertibility and finality.

Geoff Thomas
Bournemouth, England

Response:

It is my understanding that Mr. Reckman, like myself, is a member of a Reformed church that has the "Three Forms of Unity" as its confessions. He may even be an officebearer. Therefore, he, like myself, is bound to the teachings of these confessions as the faithful expression of the Word of God, Holy Scripture. He must confess these teachings. He may not call any of them into question. Among Reformed people, every debate must begin with the question, "Do the confessions address this issue, and, if so, what do they say?" If the confessions do speak to the issue, what the confessions say is decisive.

One of the important documents of confessional Reformed churches (a tau-tology) is the "Public Declaration of Agreement with the Forms of Unity" — the form read and assented to at every meeting of synod. Included is the following:

All the congregations of these churches believe all the books of the Old and of the New Testaments to

be the Word of God and confess as the true expression of their faith the Thirty-seven Articles of the Confession of the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands, formulated by the Synod of 1618-'19, together with the Heidelberg Catechism and the Canons of the Dordrecht Synod against the Remonstrants (Arminians). In conformity with the belief of all these congregations, we, as members of their synod, declare that from the heart we feel and believe that all articles and expressions of doctrine contained in the three above-named confessions, jointly called the Three Forms of Unity, in all respects agree with the Word of God, whence we reject all doctrines repugnant thereto; that we desire to conform all our actions to them, agreeably to the accepted Church Order of Dordrecht, 1618-'19, and desire to receive into our church communion everyone that agrees to our confession.


If a non-Reformed correspondent were to ask about women preachers, I would take him to Scripture.

If a Reformed correspondent were to inquire about the biblical basis for the creedal rejection of women officebearers, I would point out the texts.

But among Reformed people, the confessions are first and decisive. No challenge to them may be countenanced. To paraphrase the Roman aphorism, "*Confessio dixit, causa locuta est*" ("the confession has spoken, the matter is settled"). The exception is that every member has the right to overture synod to correct some teaching of the confession about which he is convinced that it is in error. Scripture then judges the confession.

There is no liberty in a Reformed church to militate against any teaching of the confessions.

With no reflection on any correspondent, history has shown that agitation in the Reformed churches against the authority of the confessions in fact betrays rebellion against the authority of Scripture, even though the agitation against the confessions is made in the name of the sole authority of Scripture.

— Ed. 

Greetings to the Synod...

Covenant Protestant Reformed Church in N. Ireland

Clerk of Consistory: Brian Crossett
Members: John Clarke and Johnathan McAuley
Delegate to Synod: Allister Pattison (Deacon)

To our Brethren in Jesus Christ,

Greetings in God's name on your seventy-fifth anniversary year from ourselves and our members. We rejoice with you in seeing God's blessing on your churches, and as you reflect on the past, take stock of the present and think about the future you may be assured of our prayers for you that God will keep you in the faith through his almighty power.

It is good that we are able to send a delegation once again to the Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches, and that on this occasion we are able to witness the final stages of the ratification of our sister church relationship with you. In doing so, we are able to acknowledge, as we have done before, the help and encouragement that you have been to us. It is not an exaggeration to say that your support and teaching have had a profound impact on every member of our church. We are the richer for our contact with you.

We are especially thankful for two things. The first is the continuing ministry of your missionary Pastor Hanko. A recent *Standard Bearer* observed the strength of his commitment to the United Kingdom. We can testify to the truth of this. His commitment to and care over us and the work in the UK is beyond question. It is the case that, even if he leaves us at some future date to pursue other work, we will remain indebted to him and his ministry for building foundations in us which will by God's grace remain in us for years to come. We can testify to his enthusiasm for the work in south Wales which is prospering under his contact, and we can testify also to the breadth of his contact network. A perusal of the address list for the *News* is evidence of this.

Secondly, we wish to thank you for your commitment in supporting and training our student Angus Stewart. We know that he is enjoying and profiting from his experience at your seminary. We know too that he is receiving great encouragement and practical help from your people. More amazing maybe is the knowledge that a certain female member of your churches has achieved the seeming impossibility of getting him away from his books long enough for him to be smitten with love. For this and all the rest we are glad and offer you and our Father in heaven thanks. Angus frequently enthuses about the teaching he is receiving at the hands of your professors and it is clear that he is getting critical, deep and important teaching in the Reformed Faith. We look forward to the time when, in God's will, he will be available to us to call.

Finally, we wish to reiterate our wishes for God's blessing upon you as you go forward. May Jesus be glorified in you.

Your brethren in the Lord Jesus,

Brian Crossett,
John Clarke,
Johnathan McAuley

...from Foreign Churches

Classis 2000 of the Evangelical Reformed Churches in Singapore

Convened on the 26th February 2000

At First Evangelical Reformed Church in Singapore.

Date: 11th May 2000

The synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches in America
To convene on the June 2000.

Dear brethren of the Synod,

Special anniversary greetings to you in the name of our dear Saviour and Lord Jesus Christ. It is with great joy in and thankfulness to our triune covenant-keeping God that we write this letter of greetings to you, knowing what He has done in your midst during the last 75 years of battle for the faith. There is no greater joy to us than to see His people walking in the truth in this day and age where apostasy is rampant with greater deception. Acknowledging (as you would certainly yourself) that it has been our faithful God who has done wondrously in your midst, we do lift up our heart in thankful praise to Him who assured that "when thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee" (Is. 43:2).

As you count your blessings and name them one by one, there will certainly be those who will look upon you with envy and hatred. But do be assured there are also others, like us in the ERCS, who are much encouraged by your many examples of faithful and undaunted struggle for the truth, which make this day of great rejoicing possible. It is only natural and proper in such rejoicing to acknowledge the men and women and the various other means and circumstances in life which He has been pleased to use in the care of His beloved church. Such an exercise would certainly sharpen the discernment of God's people concerning the ways of God. In times when the evil one would masquerade as an angel of light in most refined ways, godly celebrations should serve to encourage true devotion. This your celebration we do seek before the throne of grace.

We are happy and privileged in this special synod of yours to have our official delegates in your midst. Also the willingness of some of our ordinary members to pay their own way to rejoice with you does reflect the affection we have towards you at all levels of our church life. May the good relationship between our churches continue in the interest of God's kingdom in this world as we see the Reformed faith spread to the remotest regions. Together we must pray that the Lord of harvest may send forth labourers into His harvest field. It is not the money that we are lacking, but the men for the ministry. May the Lord give us many more pastors/teachers for the work even as He gathers His people.

Let us also take this opportunity to express particularly our appreciation for the help we received in this past year from your churches. In his many lectures, messages, teachings, counseling, and fellowshiping with members of our churches, Prof. and Mrs. Hanko brought untold blessings to many of us. The Feenstras were actively involved in our mission work in Myanmar and also in our attempt to start a Christian school for our children. The Korterings, of course, continue to be a great blessing in our midst as he gives us his mature counsel in the development of our churches.

Finally, we do assure you of our continual prayers for the Lord's blessings upon all the proceedings at synod. May His grace so rich guide each of you into all truth as you seek to glorify Him in His Son, our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Yours in Christ,
Deacon Chua Kian Lye
Chairman
Classical Contact Committee

Graduation 2000

Rev. David Higgs,
presentation
of gift from
the EPC



Prof. H. Hanks,
graduation speaker



Rev. Dale Kuiper

Graduate: Mr. Mark Shand

Prof. R. Decker

PRC Synod 2000

Officers of Synod:



Rev. R. Smit,
Second Clerk

Rev. C. Terpstra,
First Clerk

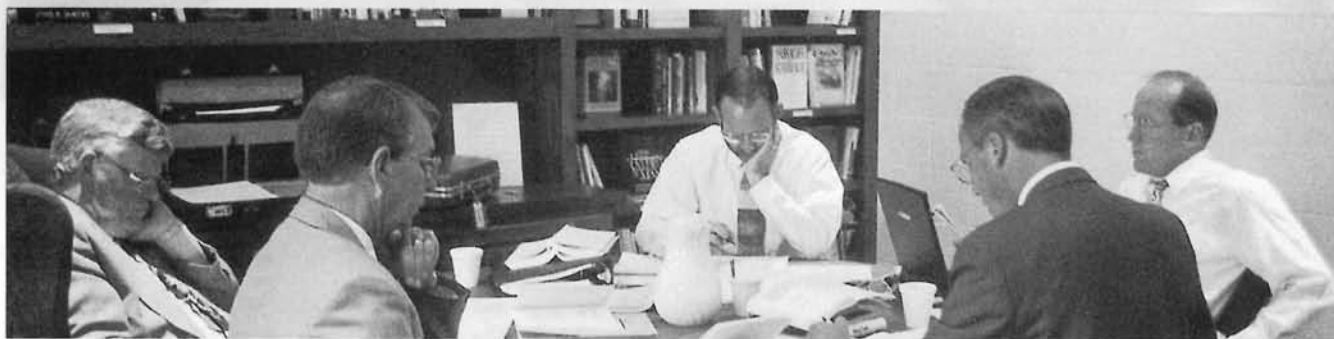
Rev. B. Gritters,
President

Rev. C. Haak,
Vice-president



Rev. Chris Colborn,
EPC of Australia

Mr. Allister Pattison,
Covenant PRC, N.I.



“Akwaaba”

Do you know what that word means?

The title illustrates what our Foreign Mission Committee (FMC) and our foreign missionary face in the foreign mission work of our churches. We regard it a privilege to work with foreign peoples, but in our contact with them we immediately realize from their correspondence that they speak their own native languages, and also English, but then only as a second or third language. The Ghanaian word “*akwaaba*” reminds us of the truth that God’s people are to be found in foreign nations which speak different languages, have different customs, have different national histories, and are of varying religious or ecclesiastical backgrounds. The Lord of the harvest, our Lord Jesus Christ, has been pleased graciously to give our Protestant Reformed Churches the opportunity to preach and bring the gospel of the Reformed faith unto foreign peoples.

Concerning that work in the past year, the FMC is happy to provide you a brief update. We trust that, having read this overview, you will also come to the conclusion that the Lord is giving our churches a significant amount of official work in Ghana and developmental work in the Philippines.

GHANA

The main work that the Lord has given our churches at this time is the Ghanaian mission field. The setup of the field has absorbed most of the energy and time of the FMC and the calling church, Hull

Protestant Reformed Church. Setting up a mission work in a distant foreign field, such as Ghana, has its own unique challenges.

This mission field in Ghana is also unique for us in that it involves a different method of beginning a mission work, which the synod of 1996 decided to implement in Ghana. At that synod of 1996, the churches decided to send a missionary to Ghana who was independent of any established, fledgling congregation or Bible study group in Ghana.

Having no group already somewhat established in Ghana presented some practical difficulties for our missionary. For example, without a core group, much of the work of settling into the city had to be done by the missionary himself. It must be noted, however, that our missionary was not entirely on his own. We were very thankful that the Rev. Gabriel Anyigba lent an indispensable hand to our missionary and his wife. As a result, it did not take long for them to settle in the city of Accra and begin the mission work in July 1999.

Another difficulty our missionary faced was the fact that at first he preached to only a very few in the living room of the mission house. We realized that this would be the case until our mission station became more known. Our beginning was minuscule on that first Lord’s day of official preaching in July 1999 (three in attendance including Rev. Moore). Now, only a year later, we have an average, regular attendance of over 70 in the morning service and 40 in the evening service. Those in attendance also include several complete covenant families.

There are definite advantages to beginning our mission work in the way we did. For example, the worship services were from the outset similar to the worship services in our Protestant Reformed Churches in Canada and the United States. Just as in our worship services, so also in the worship services in the mission gathering, all the elements of worship as commanded by God in His Word are present. The gathering is beginning to embrace the scriptural principles of Reformed worship, including the principle of psalm singing in worship. From the beginning, the mission gathering used the Psalter for congregational singing in worship.

Another example of the similarity in our worship is the fact that the Heidelberg Catechism is preached regularly. The preaching of the living truth of the Heidelberg Catechism is received by the mission gathering with a growing understanding. We learn from this that the Reformed faith and doctrines of God’s sovereign grace are not just for the saints in North America of Reformed or Presbyterian background, but also for God’s saints in Ghana. By preaching the sound doctrines of God’s Word systematically, consistently, and regularly by Heidelberg Catechism preaching, our mission gathering will by God’s indispensable blessing be built up in the faith.

In light of these examples, it seems legitimate to make the observation already that the decision by our churches to enter Ghana independently was a good decision for our foreign mission work in Ghana.

We have learned that entering Ghana independently is also fea-

Rev. Smit is pastor of the Protestant Reformed Church of Doon, Iowa and secretary of the Foreign Mission Committee.

sible from the viewpoint of the government's immigration rules. After about a year-long application process, Rev. and Mrs. Moore are now permanent residents in the country of Ghana. The mission work has obtained from the government a missionary quota of two. This means that future missionaries on the field, the Lord willing, will be granted their permanent residency status much more easily and quickly. The mission work is also incorporated, which means that our mission work is legally recognized by the government of Ghana. For these positive developments with respect to the Ghanaian government we give the Lord thanks.

One of the important aspects of entering a mission field independently is working hard at making known the distinctiveness of our preaching and teaching. This our missionary has done by extensive advertising and, most effectively, by word of mouth. Interestingly, one of the other successful tools of promoting our mission work in Accra is the Thursday evening radio program on a local radio station (105.7FM). This 30-minute radio program includes time for a short address and then for listeners to call Rev. Moore in the studio on the air with their questions. Topics of past programs include the Lord's Prayer, the Commandments, and various steps in Christ's humiliation and exaltation. Programs usually generate questions from listeners. We are thankful that the Lord has used the radio program to bring visitors to the mission gathering's worship services and weekly Bible study. Such a witness we find helpful and necessary so that those outside the fellowship may learn who we are by what we preach and teach.

We have found that the mission work prospers not only by means of an earnest, vigorous, and persistent witness through the official preaching and other subordinate means, but also by the pres-

ence and assistance of our volunteer missionary assistants. Mr. and Mrs. John Bouma arrived on the field in October 1999, and since that time they have been a tremendous help to the missionary and his wife. In their monthly reports to the FMC they have shown that they are very busy in their work. Although they are not missionaries, yet we believe they are used by the Lord through their godly example and conduct to encourage the mission gathering in a Reformed and godly confession and walk of life. The FMC is convinced that such assistants are necessary on the Ghanaian mission field. We believe that assistants will be necessary on any future foreign fields in the developing countries of the world. This would apply to a field in the Philippines, if the Lord would grant us an open door there some day for a full-time missionary.

Concerning a matter of a different nature, the FMC has also been both amazed and delighted with the ease of communicating with our foreign missionary. Technology has certainly speeded up regular communication with Rev. Moore. In comparison, our missionary in Singapore in the '80s, Rev. denHartog, had to wait weeks for letters from the FMC and the calling church about decisions on his monthly reports. By the speed of e-mail, the Internet, fiber optics, satellites, and modems, Rev. Moore receives his reports much more quickly. A letter to our missionary does not go the three-week journey of airmail, but rather the three-second journey by e-mail. The ease of worldwide communication and travel is certainly a sign that the Lord is coming quickly. The Lord gives us these things for use in foreign fields while there is still time before the Antichrist and false church will put an end to our mission work.

Frequent contact with our missionary has been mutually encouraging for the missionary and the ruling bodies. We have also

learned that many in our churches, even children in our covenant schools, have taken a moment to write the missionary a little e-mail note of encouragement from time to time. This interest and concern delights us because such notes are a visible reminder to the missionary that he, his wife, and the assistants are indeed in our thoughts and prayers. One has to live on a foreign mission field on another continent to appreciate the importance of such visible reminders of support by the saints back "home." This reminds us of what we read in Proverbs 25:25, "As cold waters to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country."

Support of the mission work has come in many ways over the past year. This support is primarily the prayers of the saints in behalf of our mission work. Our missionary covets the prayers of the saints that utterance may be given unto him, that he may open his mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel (Eph 6:19). Like our own pastors, so also our missionaries need the intercessory prayers of the saints in their behalf for blessing and strength to preach and teach by word and example in faithfulness to the Lord of the harvest.

Support has also come through the abundant offerings in the churches in the past year for our foreign mission work and for the missionary assistants fund (MAF) that is entirely supported by special offerings in our churches. The FMC is thankful to the Lord that our congregations have responded generously to the support of our missionary assistants. This continued support of the assistants appears, from the financial data, to be keeping pace with the financial needs of the assistants. For your information, the financial support of the assistants amounts to approximately \$20,000 a year. These funds pay for the housing, transportation, food, medical, and telecommunications costs of the assis-

tants. The volunteers receive no wages or tangible compensation for their work. However, for their willing and free gift of their time and energy, they do reap spiritual rewards which our current volunteers cherish as enduring and priceless. The FMC is thankful to the Lord to witness both the diligence of the assistants and the ready and willing support of our congregations.

Support has also come in other tangible ways, of which we shall mention only two examples. First, Cornerstone PRC donated copies of the Psalter to the field to meet the needs of the mission gathering in the worship services and in their homes for memorization and study. Second, an electric generator was donated by relatives of the missionary in order to provide electricity to the missionary house during the frequent power failures in greater Accra. These are examples of support in which the FMC and Hull council find encouragement in their oversight of the field. Official approval by the FMC and Hull council of such tangible and need-specific support has been enjoyable.

Another aspect of the field which required much time and thought from the FMC and Hull council was the inevitable consequence of the growing attendance at the worship services. While we might be inclined to view a lack of worship space negatively and as an inconvenience, yet from the viewpoint of our infancy as a mission work the lack of space for worship is an unexpected blessing. Interim measures have been used to alleviate extreme overcrowding. Several times the missionary assistant had to erect tents on the front lawn and driveway to accommodate adequately the gathering.

The FMC and Hull council are working to provide a long-term solution to the lack of space. It is clear that we need to provide a place which is large enough for reverent and edifying worship. Synod 2000 approved the FMC's

proposal to purchase property in Accra on which to place a building for worship. Earlier this year the FMC found a suitable piece of property and even rented the property. Our desire was to rent the property until synod 2000 gave permission to purchase it. However, the agreement was nullified by the owner of the land because of a legal problem with the agreement. In late June the owner informed us that she would renegotiate a deal with us, but at a much higher price than we were willing to spend. As a result, we are now looking for another plot in a suitable location and at a suitable price. To avoid future legal problems, we have obtained the services of a reputable lawyer. He is helping us in our search for suitable property.

A structure for worship was erected on the property earlier this year by our missionary assistant, John Bouma. The simple building was only partially completed when the legal problems surfaced in April 2000. The structure was dismantled and removed when it became apparent that the owner of the land would not sell it to us at a price we were willing to pay. We trust that soon the Lord will grant us a property on which to have a worship structure which will adequately accommodate our mission gathering.

There is other work that the FMC and Hull council look forward to doing in the coming year. In order to know the field more clearly, the FMC and Hull council will send a delegation to visit the field this fall and another to visit the field next spring. This will help the FMC and Hull council to understand more clearly the needs of the field and to become personally acquainted with the mission gathering. Such a visit is, of course, another excellent means by which we can encourage our missionary in his work. In addition, these visits are critically important to a mission work which is still relatively

very young. The FMC and Hull PRC look forward to making these visits in the coming fall 2000 and spring 2001, the Lord willing.

What we have reported thus far gives you a snapshot of the work of our churches in Ghana. The labors require much thought, time, and prayer, but they are also enjoyable. We continue to learn many things about beginning a mission field in a developing country like Ghana and about developing a fledgling mission field without a previously existing group. This experience and learning will serve us well in our work in other foreign fields, if the Lord is pleased to grant us another foreign field. From time to time we even have learned a few new Ghanaian words, such as "*akwaaba*," which means "welcome."

We believe that God will by His Spirit and grace use our feeble efforts in this little corner in the great harvest field for the ingathering of His eternally chosen church, even out of the nation, tribes, and tongues of Ghana unto the living knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth.

PHILIPPINES

The FMC has also been busy with developing our contacts in the Philippines. Although we try diligently to continue our long distance correspondence with our Filipino contacts and groups, correspondence remains somewhat sporadic. This ought not to be regarded as a lack of interest by our contacts in the Philippines. We have learned that although our contacts often do not correspond regularly, they continue to study the materials (RFPFA books, *Standard Bearer*, Reformed Witness Hour booklets, and many pamphlets which our churches produce) which we have sent them. When a delegation visits them in the Philippines, the leaders of our contacts often discuss what they have studied. Hence, it is true that the best means of developing the

contacts into a future mission field is by face-to-face instruction from our delegations.

The FMC sent a synodically authorized delegation in October 1999. As is true of all the delegations, Rev. D. Kleyn and Rev. R. Miersma had a full schedule of visits, lectures, preaching, Bible studies, and meetings with the leaders of several groups in the Philippines. They worked among groups in Bacolod, Cagayan de Oro, Manila, and the Daet/Labo area. The delegation found that the work was fruitful and that the preaching and instruction was eagerly received.

In the Daet/Labo area, the delegation worked with leaders and members of seven churches, who desire to work together to becoming a Reformed denomination on the basis of the Reformed truths. To obtain this goal, they seek our assistance.

In Bacolod and Cagayan de Oro the delegation noted some different developments. Groups with which we previously worked had either disbanded, as in the case of the group in Bacolod, or split, as in the case with the Bible Study Fellowship in Cagayan de Oro. The result of these developments has been that in the Lord's providence our work is narrowed to those who truly desire help to be established in the truths of the Reformed faith. Though these developments might

seem negative from the viewpoint of the number of contacts, yet the FMC regards such pruning as necessary for possible mission work. This is true particularly with the group in Cagayan de Oro. As a result of the split in Cagayan de Oro, our contact is now narrowed down to a group of nine families who are led by Pastor Remegio Lapiz and who desire our help to become Reformed in worship, preaching, doctrine, and life.

The October 1999 delegation did more work in Manila than did previous delegations. The fruit of this work is that we have contact with two groups in Manila. We are also thankful for these new and growing contacts. For the FMC the prospect of work in Manila as well as in outlying cities presents exciting possibilities for future work.


With that in mind, the FMC plans to send two synodically approved delegations to the Philippines. One will be sent this summer and the other early in 2001. The August 2000 delegation will preach on the Lord's days among the groups there and also instruct in lectures on eschatology. These truths are of interest to our contacts. We desire to satisfy their interest by bringing them the Reformed faith concerning the truths of death, immortality, the return of Christ, the final judgment, and the

eternal state. The FMC trusts that the respective consistories will release their pastors for this work this year and early next year.

Both of these visits have the mandate from synod to work very cautiously and carefully towards the goal of proposing to a future synod that we send a missionary to labor among our Filipino contacts. The FMC will continue to provide news of these visits and their conclusions.

The FMC takes the opportunity to thank those consistories and congregations who have released their pastors for past delegations. The FMC appreciates deeply the sacrifice made when your pastors are serving on a delegation in the Philippines. This commitment and help is necessary to discern whether we have been given the opportunity to send a missionary to our Filipino contacts.

In conclusion, the FMC covets your prayers. We desire that the Lord will grant us the necessary wisdom and strength to serve the churches diligently and fruitfully. We desire that you continue to make known before the Lord in prayer our need for God's blessing upon our work.

May we be accounted by the Lord faithful in our work for the cause of the Lord's kingdom and covenant in our foreign mission work. 

All Around Us

Rev. Gise VanBaren

■ Women in Office

This week, as I write this article, the synod of the Christian Reformed Church will begin its meetings. At these meetings, that synod will treat a committee report on "Women in Office." Five years ago the synod had decided to allow the

ordaining of women as ministers, elders, and evangelists. The individual classes were given permission to waive the rule of their Church Order which allowed only male leadership within the church. Although there were some legitimate objections to this course of action, there were 18 (of 47) classes in the CRC that did waive the rule. Subsequently, nine women have been ordained as pastors or chaplains in the CRC.

Five years ago it was also decided that there would be no protests or objections allowed at following synods until the synod of 2000 reviewed a study committee report and decided on further action. The time for that review has arrived. The CRC synod can conceivably (or inconceivably) rescind its past decision, or give final and full approval of women in office—or waffle and postpone a final decision to be made later (something

Rev. VanBaren is a minister emeritus in the Protestant Reformed Churches.

the study committee proposes).

When you read this article, the decision of the CRC synod will have been made and you will doubtlessly have become aware of what it is.

Of particular interest was an article appearing in the *Banner*, April 24, 2000 by Rev. David Feddes, radio pastor of the Back to God Hour. It was a remarkable article because of its title and content: "Women in Office—What Changed My Mind." It was remarkable also in that this appeared in the *Banner*, which has long supported the "women in office" concept. I quote some of the statements made by Feddes:

In seminary I studied with talented women who wanted to become pastors. Opponents of women's ordination struck me as old-fashioned and cranky. I read books and articles that said it was permissible, even required, for women to serve in all church offices. My regard for women's abilities made me eager to find scriptural, scholarly support for female pastors.

I did not find what I wanted. The more I studied arguments in favor of women's ordination, the more hollow they sounded. The more I examined the church's historic position, the more solid and scriptural I found it to be, whether I liked it or not. The office of pastor or spiritual overseer, I found, is for certain men and not for women. Much as I might want to think otherwise, the case is too strong at three levels: practice, precept, and principle.

Rev. D. Feddes continues by pointing out the "practice" both in the Old and in the New Testament. In the Old Testament the priests were always men. In the New Testament Christ appointed twelve men to serve as apostles. Historically, the church continued to call men to serve as pastors. He emphasizes that "some cults that spun away from Christianity into Gnosticism or goddess worship or-

daind women as priestesses, but the church never did. With each passing century, responsibility for official teaching and church governance remained a task for men."

He emphasizes, secondly, the "precept" demanding male leadership. He shows that God commanded Moses to establish a priesthood of Aaron and his sons (not Miriam and her daughters). He reminds further of the New Testament requirements laid down for leadership within the church. He states also:

...Paul says, "I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man."

That is not just a suggestion that we might be unwise to ignore; it's a command that we would be wrong to disobey. "Do not permit" means it's not allowable, not merely that it's not advisable. It is the precept of Christ's apostle, written with the Lord's authority under the Holy Spirit's inspiration.

Rev. Feddes goes on to explain the "principle" involved in male leadership in the church. It is, of course, principle which should be of utmost importance to the Christian. Feddes reminds the readers:

After saying, "I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man," Paul goes on to explain, "For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner" (I Tim. 2:13-14).

Paul does not merely give advice for a particular time and situation. He appeals to a principle established at creation and violated in the Fall: the principle of male headship.

God created a man first, then formed a woman from him and for man. "For man did not come from woman, but woman from man; neither was man created for woman, but woman for man" (I Cor. 11:8-9). When the man and the woman first met, the man took the lead by naming her and de-

fining her relation to himself (Gen. 2:23).

God's order of creation was Adam first, then Eve. Satan's order of temptation was Eve first, then Adam. But God's order remained Adam first. After Adam and Eve sinned and hid, the Lord called to *the man*, "Where are you?" (Gen. 3:9). Although Eve sinned first, God addressed Adam first. Primary responsibility remained with the man.

Male headship, established at creation, violated during the Fall into sin, then reaffirmed by God, is the principle that underlies the precept and practice of ordaining men as leaders in the church. God wants godly male leadership in the home and in God's household, the church. Indeed, a man's ability to lead his family is a mark of whether he can lead God's church. "If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?" (I Tim. 3:5).

Male headship expresses God's creation design. It reflects the relation between Christ and his church (Eph. 5:23). It even parallels life within the Godhead: "The head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God" (I Cor. 11:3). As God the Father and Christ are united and equal, with the Father leading and Christ submitting, so man and woman are united and equal, with complementary roles in family and church.

Feddes points out that "many church members, including officebearers, have never heard a sermon about whether women should be ordained. Many pastors (on either side of the issue) say little or nothing about this from the pulpit...."

Feddes encourages the church members to study the issue anew. "Veterans of long-running debates over women's ordination sometimes complain, 'We've been studying this for decades, and nobody's mind is likely to change anymore.' But many, especially those of us under the age of 40, have not stud-

ied it so long and may not be so entrenched as battle-weary veterans think."

To what Feddes writes concerning women in office, we can give a loud and resounding "Amen!" The arguments, obviously, are not new. It is refreshing, nevertheless, to hear them repeated briefly but clearly.

The article of Feddes, according to the *Grand Rapids Press*, June 10, 2000, created a measure of anger in the CRC.

(Rev. Ronald Meyer, pastor of Drenthe Christian Reformed Church, states:) "I guess I thought we'd all pretty much decided to cave in at this point—that there was no hope of winning, so what's the use of trying? But I'm encouraged by the conservative voices that have chosen to speak out."

One of these is the Rev. David Feddes, a broadcast minister on the Back to God Hour's worldwide English radio program. Feddes angered some with an April essay in *The Banner*, the CRC official magazine, explaining why he believes the Bible does not permit women to serve as ministers.

Feddes said he wrestled with the question during seminary, wanting to find justification for female clergy. But after studying Scripture, he said, "I couldn't convince myself of that case."

He said he spoke out because he felt that if the local-option policy is to continue, churches should hear both sides.

"There are those who believe if you work in a public agency, you should avoid controversy. I believe certainly while not courting controversy, those called to positions of leadership should lead."

The study committee recommends, according to the *Press*:

...(to continue) the local option policy with some modifications. Those modifications would:

- Enable classes to allow a congregation to hire women, even if the classis has not waived the male qualification. Women would not be permitted to attend classis

meetings unless the classis invited them.

- Allow CRC agencies to appoint women as ministers, in areas where the local classis has approved them.

- Call for another study committee to review the policy, to be appointed in 2003 and report back in 2005.

A minority of the nine-member study committee goes a step further, recommending that women be allowed to serve as Synod delegates beginning in 2002.

Officials expect Synod will adopt the majority report, though not without opposition.

"They have found a way here that will be not to tip to one side of the church or the other, but kind of a steady course," said the Rev. David Engelhard, CRC general secretary. "I'm both hopeful and expectant that the position the committee has laid out will actually prevail."

It appears clear that the attempt will be made to postpone for another five years a final decision. A continuing study committee, appointed in the year 2003 to report in 2005, must study—what? Probably again it will be studying how the decision of women in office can be finalized in the denomination without causing too great additional loss of membership. Surely it will not need to study the rightness or wrongness of the issue of women in office—synod has already decided that. It must rather study how to placate the opponents while slowly inching ahead to final and full approval of women in the ministry.

At the same time one must commend Rev. Feddes in his changed stance. Though it seems strange, when the "practice, precept, and principle" involved is as strong as he correctly insists, that he or anyone else could have ever doubted it, his "conversion" is, nevertheless, testimony of the power of the infallible Word applied by the Spirit. One wonders, however, at one statement Feddes

makes in the article: "Ordaining women may not be the worst error, but it is an error." Does this mean that Feddes and many others agree that, though "practice, precept, and principle" all oppose the position of "women in office," they will remain in the denomination in spite of any decision of synod in June? It seems to me that it would be very difficult then to live with one's conscience.

Those who support the current position of the CRC give a certain lip service to the testimony of Scripture. (The "Rev." Mary) "Antonides said she was discouraged to see the number of overtures that want to turn back the clock. 'At the same time, I share with these people a common rootedness in Scripture and a commitment to do what we think Scripture teaches,' she added. 'We both want Scripture to be upheld and the church to be blessed. We just end up at a different place.'"

The *Press* does not report any of the scriptural proof to which Antonides alludes. It does, strangely, state:

When the Rev. Mary Antonides looks at the future of women in the Christian Reformed Church, she looks no further than the girls in her congregation.

"I just think about the children in my church," said Antonides, pastor of Eastern Avenue CRC. "The little girls who play minister, who dress up in their parents' clothes and do communion and baptize their dolls."

If the CRC were to once again forbid women to be ministers, it would be devastating to those little girls and the church they're growing up in, Antonides says.

"We have so much good coming out of this," Antonides said of the CRC's 5-year-old policy allowing local groups of churches to ordain women. "To back up and say we were wrong—we don't have a clue as to how much pain and grief that would cause."

Antonides does express some-

what of a threat if synod were to reverse its position: "If that policy were reversed, she predicts the move would be 'fought tooth and nail' and could create legal problems with the women already hired."


The *Press* reported also that "about 365 Calvin College faculty, staff and students have made their views known, too. They signed a petition urging the Synod to re-

move the male officer-holder requirement for all churches. The current restrictions on women create 'significant tension between the CRC and Calvin College' and have made Calvin less attractive to prospective and current faculty, the letter states."

"...Others say it's absurd to suggest Scripture condones what they regard as discrimination

against women.

"It's almost a form of abuse as far as I'm concerned," said Gerald Vandezante, a Toronto activist who helped write a letter to synod urging full use of women's gifts in all areas. "Not to embrace them within the structure of the CRC is to treat them as second-class citizens."

"Convincing" arguments, indeed!! 

Report of Classis East

May 10, 2000

Hope Protestant Reformed Church

Classis East met in regular session at the Hope Protestant Reformed Church. The churches were represented by two delegates with the exception of Covenant PRC, Wyckoff, whose delegate had to return home after being stranded in Chicago for some hours. Part of this session was observed by church history students from Covenant Christian High School. Rev. J. Laning was the chairman of this session.

Several matters required extensive attention from the classis. The first dealt with Rev. Richard Flikkema's request not to extend his eligibility for a


call in our churches and thus terminate his ministerial credentials according to Article 12 of the Church Order. The classis took this decision reluctantly and expressed its pastoral concern to Rev. Flikkema that he find grace to accept this decision and grace to be used in different ways in the service of our churches. The decision had the concurrence of the delegates *ad examina* of Classis West.

Classis also heard a protest from a brother regarding classis' decisions in a case involving separate maintenance and consenting to an unbiblical divorce.

The issue raised by the protestant was whether the classis may declare whether certain decisions can "fall away" in the context of other decisions being taken. Classis did not sustain this protest.

In other business, classis granted classical appointments to the Hull PRC for the summer months and approved the work of its stated clerk and the classical committee.

Expenses for this session came to \$1,225.19. Classis will meet next on September 13, 2000 at the Faith PRC.

Respectfully submitted,
Jon J. Huisken, Stated Clerk 

News From Our Churches

Denomination Activities

Our seminary has licensed Mr. Angus Stewart and Mr. Rodney Kleyn to speak a word of edification in our churches as part of their seminary training. Mr. Kleyn just completed his second year in our seminary and is a member of the Southwest PRC in Grandville, MI, while Mr. Stewart has just completed his third year of studies and is a member of the Covenant PRC in Northern Ireland. In addition, the seminary has also made arrangements with the Hudsonville, MI congregation for

his internship this summer and the first semester of the next school year, which will be his last year of studies at the seminary, the Lord willing.

Our Psalter is now available on CD. The entire set is 18 volumes. Each Psalter selection is recorded on Grand Piano with an introduction, appropriate stanzas, and conclusion. The recording was originally designed to be used as accompaniment for singing, but is also very pleasant listening. While the recording was done for the use of our domestic and foreign missionaries, additional copies were made for others who would like the product. Other possible uses could

include family devotions, visiting of the sick or aged, easy listening, Sunday afternoon meditation, etc. For more information contact Deborah Benson, a member of the Bethel PRC, at 847-464-5012 or bykerbenson@email.msn.com.

In connection with this June's 75th anniversary of our churches, the Spring Ladies League meeting of the churches in Iowa and Minnesota featured Rev. Daniel Kleyn speaking on the subject, "The Calling of Women in our Churches: Has It Changed Since 1924?"

Evangelism Activities

The Evangelism Committee of the Byron Center, MI PRC hosted two informative classes this

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

spring to help their community better understand our churches. On April 27, Byron's pastor, Rev. Doug Kuiper, spoke on the topic, "The Protestant Reformed Churches: Distinctive from Our Origin"; and on May 4 Rev. Audred Spriensma, pastor of the Grandville, MI PRC, spoke on "The Protestant Reformed Churches: Distinctive Today."

On the evening of May 5 the Evangelism Committee of the Bethel PRC in Roselle, IL sponsored a Spring Lecture. Rev. Nathan Brummel, pastor of the Cornerstone PRC in Schererville, IN, was their guest speaker. He spoke on the subject, "Prayer and Evangelism."

In recognition of our 75th anniversary as Protestant Reformed Churches, the Evangelism Committee of the First PRC in Edmonton, Alberta, CN sponsored an informative Spring Lecture on May 12. Their pastor, Rev. Michael DeVries, spoke on the topic, "What is Protestant Reformed?"

The Evangelism Committee of the First PRC in Holland, MI recently received their latest Spanish pamphlet back from the printers. It is a translation of Prof. David Engelsma's "Marriage and Divorce."

Mission Activities

On the weekend of May 29-31 the members of the Pittsburgh

Mission planned to attend their second annual Mission Retreat. Missionary Mahtani gave two speeches on the subject of "Christian Unity." There was plenty of time for fellowship as well as fun and games for kids of all ages. Several members of the Independent Bible Church in Wierton, Ohio were also expected to be in attendance. The week before this Retreat, Rev. Mahtani was scheduled to speak at a seminar on Reformed Evangelism, hosted by the Grace Presbyterian Church in Lanham, Maryland. From there he planned to travel to Fayetteville, NC in order to preach for the group there the following Sunday.

Rev. Mitchell Dick, pastor of the Grace PRC in Standale, MI, was scheduled to preach for Fayetteville, Sunday, June 11.

Minister Activities

Rev. Steve Houck, pastor of the Peace PRC in Lansing, IL, underwent open-heart surgery in mid-May. He had experienced chest pains, and an angiogram revealed three or four blockages. Since that surgery he has returned home and continues to recover. In addition, his wife Carolyn had a recent blood transfusion that left her feeling stronger, and her most recent scan revealed that the tumors, which were reduced by

therapy, have remained the same and have not been growing. Let us remember them and their family in our prayers.


Rev. and Mrs. Allen Brummel were blessed with the birth of Steven Jay on May 19. Rev. Brummel is pastor of the South Holland, IL PRC.

Updating calls made by the Hull, IA PRC, we can inform you that since our last "News" in May, Rev. Ron VanOverloop declined the call he had been considering to be their next pastor. Hull's council then presented their tenth trio to their congregation. This trio was made up of the Revs. Haak, Key, and VanderWal, and on May 15, they called Rev. Key for the second time since Rev. Moore, their former pastor, left to serve as missionary to Ghana, Africa. As many of you already know, God led Rev. Steven Key to accept that call. We thank God for that, and we also remember our Randolph, WI congregation as they now wait on the Lord to provide a new undershepherd.

Randolph's first trio consists of the Revs. Haak, Koole, and Doug Kuiper. They will call on July 3.

Food For Thought

"The day of the Lord is likely to be a dreadful day to them that despise the Lord's day."

— G. Swinnock 

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Classis West of the Protestant Reformed Churches will be hosted by the Randolph Protestant Reformed Church in Randolph, Wisconsin on Wednesday, September 6, 2000 at 8:30 A.M., the Lord willing. All material for the classical agenda is to be in the hands of the stated clerk by Monday, August 7, thirty days before classis convenes. All delegates or visitors in need of lodging or transportation from the airport should notify the Randolph's clerk,

Mr. Gary Buteyn
N11143 Wiersma Rd.
Randolph, WI 53956
Phone: (920) 326-5666.

Rev. Steven Key,
Stated Clerk

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Adult Fellowship Society of Hope Redlands PRC express their Christian sympathy to the Jabaay family in the death of their husband, father, son, and brother,

MR. JIM JABAAY.

May the family be comforted in the assurance of God's Word in Romans 8:28: "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose."

Rev. Arie denHartog, Pres.
Esther Huisken, Sec.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The congregation and council of Southeast PRC extend their Christian sympathy to Jim and Beth Koerner in the death of his father,

MARVIN KOERNER.

May they find comfort in the Word of God found in Philippians 3:20, 21: "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."

Rev. Dale Kuiper, Pres.
Ed Hekstra, Clerk

NOTICE

Edgerton PRC will now be holding their second worship service on Sundays at 6:00 P.M. instead of 7:30 P.M. for the months of March through November. December through February, the second service is at 2:00 P.M.

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On May 30, 2000 our parents and grandparents,

DARYL and JANIS KUIPER,

celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary. We thank them for the many years of Christian love and instruction they have given us. We thank God for the years that they have had together, and pray that He will continue to bless them in their marriage in the years to come. "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever" (Psalm 23:6).

- ✿ Brent
- ✿ Brad and Becky Butgereit
Bradley James
- ✿ Brad
- ✿ Dawn
- ✿ Beth
- ✿ Derek

Grandville, Michigan

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On May 29, 2000 our parents,

GARY and CRYSTAL VAN DYKE,

celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary. We rejoice with them in the many years God has given them together. We are thankful to our covenant Father for the godly instruction and example we have received from them. It is our prayer that God will continue to bless them in their marriage in the years to come.

"But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children; to such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them" (Psalm 103:17, 18).

- ✿ Eric and Jessica VanDyke
Aaron, Reece
- ✿ Brad and Trisha Bruinsma
Kari
- ✿ Mark
- ✿ Joel

Hudsonville, Michigan

TEACHER NEEDED

Hope Protestant Reformed Christian School is in need of a Protestant Reformed music/band instructor for the 2000/2001 school year. Interested individuals, including those who are pursuing an education in this area, should contact Mike Lotterman, 1382 Su-Lew, Walker, MI 49544 (616) 453-6464, or Ron Koole (616) 453-9717.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The council and congregation of Cornerstone PRC express their Christian sympathy to fellow member Mrs. Carolyn VanBaren and her family in the death of her mother,

MRS. JOAN DEUR.

"Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel and afterward receive me to glory" (Psalm 73:24).

Rev. Nathan Brummel, pres.
Rich Worries, clerk

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

In deep Christian sympathy to the brothers and brother-in-law of

MR. JOHN VANDEN TOP.

The Doon PRC Men's Society expresses sorrow with them in the death of a fellow member. May comfort be received from Deuteronomy 31:63, "For the Lord thy God, he it is that doth go with thee: he will not fail nor forsake thee."

Rev. Smit, President
David Wiersma, Secretary

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

It was with great joy and thankfulness to our Lord that on June 20 we celebrated our parents',

FRED and NETTY TOLSMA,

25th wedding anniversary. We thank God for His loving mercies in joining our parents together, as well as giving them the strength and love to raise their children and watch them grow. It is our prayer that God will keep them for many years to come so that they may continue to provide instruction and wisdom in the ways of the Lord to their children as well as grow in the church of our God.

"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another" (1 John 1:7).

- ✿ Russell Tolsma
- ✿ Rachel Tolsma
- ✿ Trevor Tolsma

Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The congregation and council of Southeast PRC extend their Christian sympathy to Nell Philips in the death of her sister,

ALICE GRIFFIOEN.

May they find comfort from Isaiah 12:2, "Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the LORD JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation."

Rev. Dale Kuiper, Pres.
Ed Hekstra, Clerk

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Men's Society of Hope PRC in Redlands extends its sympathy to our fellow member Jake Jabaay and to Laurie, David, Michael, Matthew, and Katie Jabaay in the death of their beloved son, husband, and father,

JAMES DEAN JABAAY.

The saints here share in their grief and sorrow, and pray for their comfort, as promised us in God's word as found in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17, "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

Marlin Feenstra, Secretary

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The congregation and council of Southeast PRC express their Christian sympathy to Jim and Dot Swart in the death of her brother,

DONALD FYNWEVER.

May they find comfort in the words of Job 19:25, 26: "For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God."

Rev. Dale Kuiper, Pres.
Ed Hekstra, Clerk

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Senior Bible Fellowship Society of Faith PRC express their sincere Christian sympathy to Mark and Lynda Scholten in the death of his father,

GORD SCHOLTEN.

Our prayers are that you may be comforted with words of our Lord in Isaiah 43:2-4, "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee: for I am the Lord thy God; thou wast precious in my sight."

Gary VanDyke, President
Barb Bol, Secretary

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The council and congregation of Cornerstone PRC express their Christian sympathy to fellow member Mrs. Sharon VanBaren and her family in the death of her mother,

MRS. HILDA ZANDSTRA.

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

Rev. Nathan Brummel, pres.
Rich Worries, clerk

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The council and congregation of Kalamazoo PRC express their sincere Christian sympathy to Mrs. Muriel Kiel, her husband, and their family in the passing of their father, grandfather, great grandfather, and great great grandfather,

ADRIAN ALPHENAAR.

"And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" (Revelation 21: 2-4).

Rev. Wilbur Bruinsma, President
Mr. Tom Kiel, Clerk

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On July 11, 2000, D.V., our beloved parents,

**FRED AND ALBERTA (Windemuller)
BOUWKAMP,**

will observe their 60th wedding anniversary. We, their grateful children, are thankful to our Lord and Savior for sparing them for each other and for us these many years.

- ✿ Judy and Frank Triezenberg
- ✿ Fred and Jo-Anne Bouwkamp
- ✿ David and Char Bouwkamp
- 11 Grandchildren
- 7 Great Grandchildren

Grand Rapids, Michigan

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On, June 6, 2000, our beloved parents, **REV. AND MRS. MICHAEL DE VRIES**, celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary. We, their children, are grateful to our heavenly Father for keeping them for each other and for us through these years. May the Lord continue to bless and keep them that they may long live together in all godliness and holiness.

"For this God is our God for ever and ever: He will be our guide even unto death" (Psalm 48:14).

Their grateful children,

- ✿ Jeff DeVries
- ✿ Connie DeVries
- ✿ Russ DeVries
- ✿ Karen DeVries

Edmonton, Alberta

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The council and congregation of Southeast PRC extend Christian sympathy to Rev. and Mrs. Breen in the death of Rev. Breen's sister-in-law,

MRS. BERNICE BREEN,

at the age of 95. May they find comfort in the words of Lamentations 3:24-26, "The LORD is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him. The LORD is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him. It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the LORD."

Rev. Dale Kuiper, Pres.
Ed Hekstra, Clerk

NOTICE

As of July 9, the address of Rev. Key will be: 1004 Hayes Ave., Hull, IA 51239.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The council and congregation of Southeast PRC extend Christian sympathy to Mr. and Mrs. Don Hauck in the passing away of Don's sister,

SHIRLEY GANSER,

in Aberdeen, SD, at the age of 62. May the family be comforted in the words of Psalm 103:10, 11, "He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him."

Rev. Dale Kuiper, Pres.
Ed Hekstra, Clerk

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The council of Faith PRC express their heartfelt sympathy to fellow officebearer, elder Mark Scholten, in the death of his father, **GORDON SCHOLTEN.**

It is our prayer he will find comfort and strength in God's word as recorded in Psalm 138:8, "The LORD will perfect that which concerneth me: thy mercy, O LORD, endureth for ever: forsake not the works of thine own hands."

Rev. Kenneth Koole, pres.
Peter VanDerSchaaf, clerk

NOTICE!!

Classis East will meet in regular session on Wednesday, September 13, 2000 at the Faith Protestant Reformed Church, Jenison, MI. Material for this session must be in the hands of the stated clerk no later than August 14, 2000.

Jon J. Huiskens, Stated Clerk

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Jr. Mr. and Mrs. Society of Hope PRC express their heartfelt sympathy to Mr. and Mrs. Scott Moelker in the death of their son,

JACOB JOHN,

who was stillborn on May 1, 2000. May they find comfort in the words of Psalm 139:14-16, "I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them." May the God of comfort strengthen them during this time of loss.

Bill Langerak, President
Valerie Minderhoud, Secretary

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The members of the Adult Bible Society of the Doon PRC express their Christian sympathy to our fellow members Alan and Vi DeBoer in the death of their father and father-in-law,

MR. JOHN VAN DEN TOP.

May they and we find comfort in the assurance of the psalmist, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints" (Psalm 116:15).

Rev. Smit, President
Lori Eppinga, Secretary