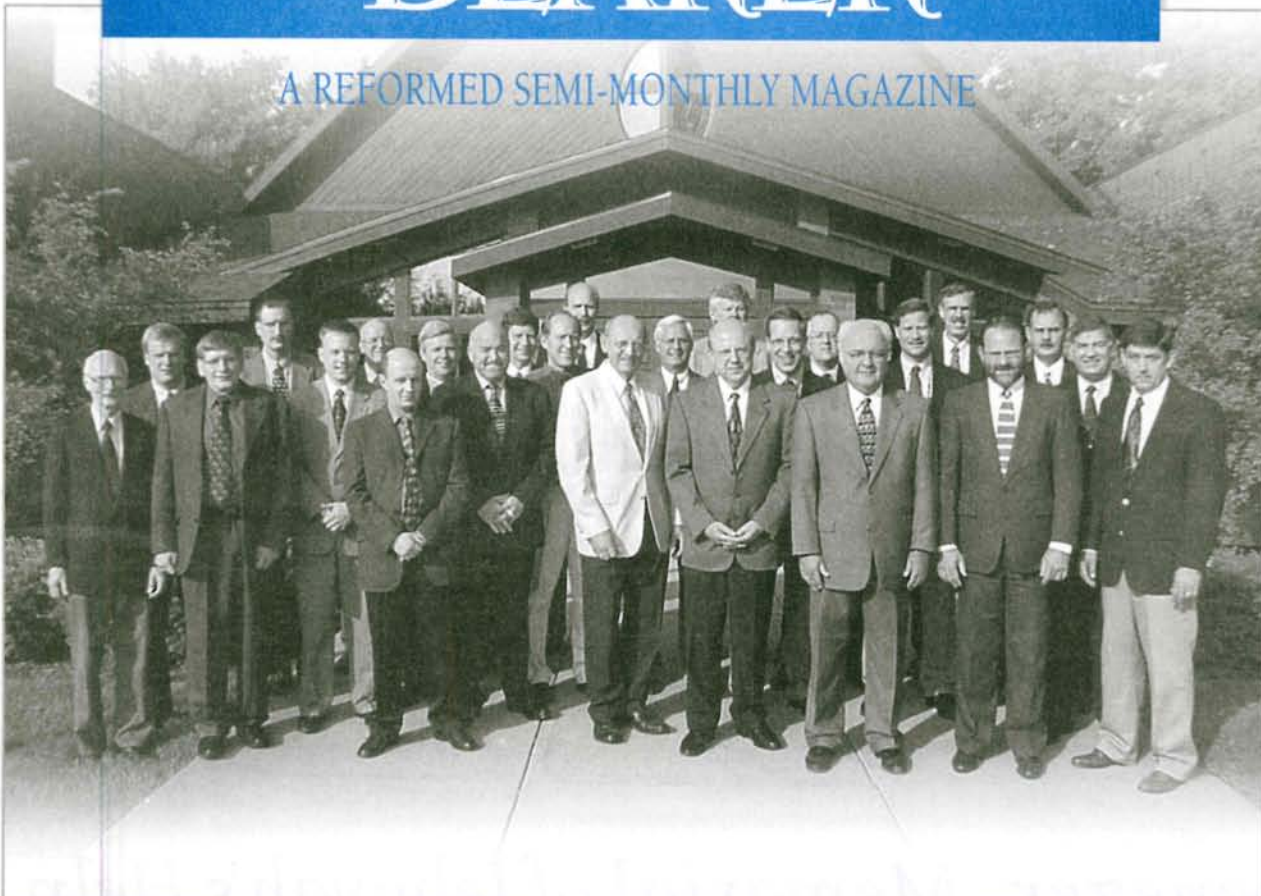


# THE *July 2001* STANDARD BEARER

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE



*PRC*  
**SYNOD** *Highlights*  
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Meditation

Rev. Barry Gritters

# Ebenezer: Memorial of Jehovah's Help

I Samuel 7:1-12

**E**steemed brethren of synod and beloved church of Jesus Christ, if the PRC are anything, they are churches that by the grace of God *preach* the grace of God—sovereign, irresistible, particular grace, in Jesus, God's Mes-

siah. If the PRC desire to be known by something, they desire to be known as churches willing to deny themselves and take up their cross for the sake of the defense of that truth. Those were our origins. That is our history since our beginning. For this, we are profoundly grateful to God.

Esteemed brethren of synod, if the PRC will remain anything acceptable to God, and therefore useful to God, they must do so (preach grace) in a spirit and attitude that

reflects that grace which they preach. One great threat to genuine thankfulness which we are called to express is that we defend and preach that grace in *pride*. Contradictory as that may seem, it is a real danger that we preach grace in pride, and forget that the salvation of us and the preservation of God's church is all of God.

The remedy for that sin and the power for a right spirit is the Word of God (always the Word)—particularly the word in the text before us.

*Rev. Gritters is pastor of the Protestant Reformed Church of Hudsonville, Michigan. This Meditation is the text of the pre-synodical sermon preached by Rev. Gritters in First PRC on June 11, 2001.*

There Samuel instructs the people of God—then and now—to recognize and from the heart confess: “Hitherto hath Jehovah helped us.” The remedy for that temptation is that we hear the gospel that we stand for and have stood for for 75 years. The Lord has helped us; the Lord is our Rock; we are what we are, not because of our strength and our faithfulness, but because of God in His sovereign, irresistible grace.

As we begin our labors of synod—the work of the churches—for another year, little is more important for us as delegates and churches than such a recognition—such a humble, contrite recognition: “Hitherto hath Jehovah helped us.”

### **The battle with the Philistines**

Samuel erected a large stone memorial in memory of God’s gracious help for the people of Israel up to this point. Here, rather than a pile of stones as some memorials were, the memorial erected was one large stone—a slab of granite or some other stone, stood on end, perhaps as much as 10 or 15 feet high. One can still see such memorials in the ruins in the land today. This was a memorial of Jehovah’s help. It was so named: “Ebenezer—Stone of Help.”

Thus, when the children would come by this stone and ask, “What does this memorial mean?” parents would remind their children what God had done and shall do.

Israel had gathered in public assembly to worship Jehovah, confessing past sin, beseeching God’s blessing on their nation. Twenty years earlier, Israel had suffered a stunning defeat by the Philistines when foolishly they took the ark into battle, supposing that it would work like a magic charm: “Bring the ark, and we shall succeed.” Even the children present tonight remember that these were the days of Hophni and Phinehas, priest-thieves in the temple, when pathetic Eli died in his tragic fall,

when Ichabod was born (“the glory has departed”). In the righteous judgment of God upon Israel’s pride and presumption and worldliness, God delivered the ark into the hand of the Philistines. Indeed, to uphold His own honor, God forced the Philistines to return the ark, on account of the pestilence that appeared wherever it went. But twenty years passed, with the ark sitting in the obscurity of the house of Abinadab, unused.

During this time, Israel came to repentance. God had called young Samuel to preach the glory of the mercy and grace of God, by which the Lord worked a new spirit in the hearts of the people so that they “lamented after the Lord.” So Samuel called them to a public assembly at Mizpeh, to worship God and express their repentance and love for the Lord (v. 6).

But while Israel was there, the Philistines heard of their gathering and prepared to fight against them. Did they misinterpret this as a gathering for war, or did they simply see it as an opportune time to attack the vulnerable—an unarmed enemy, with women and children? In any case, they came up against Israel to war.

But God is the God of Israel. He loves His people, hears their cries, and will not allow them to be overthrown. So He sends a great storm that breaks out over the Philistines. Bolts of lightning flash from the heavens, breaking the ranks of the enemy. Torrents of rain beat down upon their faces. Great, booming peals of thunder pound in their ears. God strikes terror in their hearts, causing them to flee. Israel pursues, and defeats. God gives Israel a great victory.

Samuel erects a stone. Ebenezer: “Hitherto hath the Lord helped.”

### **The battle in the church today**

We assemble tonight to commemorate God’s victory for us in preserving us as churches against all attacks of the enemy to destroy

us. The PRC have many enemies, many we have not even seen, enemies that hate the PRC as a manifestation of the true church in the world, who desire to see her destroyed, who perhaps hate us more because we understand our weaknesses, have seen our sins, and know our vulnerabilities. They are mighty powers! They include influential people! They have powerful weapons in pulpit, magazine, and radio. They desire to destroy our confession of the truth and our life of holiness and antithetical living.

But the Lord defeats them. He has! And we gather tonight beseeching God that He may yet in the future preserve and protect us as Protestant Reformed Churches in the world.

If He shall, it will not now be by nature—thunder and lightning, rain and hail—but by the mighty power and thunder of His Word. By the Word He discomfits them, puts them to flight, and smites them. By His Word He watches over His children, preserves them, allows them to worship Him in peace.

We memorialize tonight (with grateful hearts) the great victories of God by His Word to preserve His churches here. That’s why we are here, why we are what we are. And if we shall be something in the future, we shall be something because of that.

### **The real help of Jehovah**

But the great help God gave was not so much the victory over Philistines. His great help was that He gave them repentance and victory over sin. Their great need was not only for strength to fight the enemy outside of them, but for strength to fight the enemy within. What they needed to beseech God for (the faithful among them had been doing that for 20 years!) was that God would give them the grace of repentance so that they would do what is said in verse 2: “Israel lament(ed) before the



Lord." They were penitent before God. They confessed their sins, poured out water before the Lord and said publicly, "We have sinned before Jehovah."

That is the victory He gave before the thunder and battle in the field. In this way, they had victory over the enemy.

You see, the reason they assembled before the Lord for worship was to express publicly their sorrow and beseech God to bless them again. That they "lamented before Jehovah" means that they missed the Lord and His favor. They grieved over their sins that led to the Lord's displeasure and a sense of His absence. Indeed, they also grieved over the Philistines' oppression of them. But they also missed the Lord, who had departed on account of their sins: they lamented *after the LORD*.

This was not enough! Samuel was not satisfied. "Your sorrow, if it is a godly sorrow, will produce fruit." What fruit, Samuel tells them in verse 3: "If ye indeed return to the Lord with all your hearts, put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the Lord, and serve him only." That was not as easy as we might think. Their idols were fashionable, modern, satisfying, attractive, with free and easy revelries to please their carnal minds. God's worship was simple, severe, self-denying, with little to attract the human heart.

But Israel put away their idols and together confessed their sin and their love for the Lord. And *in that way*, the Lord gave them the victory, preserved them as a nation.

What needs emphasis here is that *God* worked this great work in them! About *that* Samuel says: "The Lord helped us! *God* gave us that sorrow! *God* worked in us lamentation and confession. And God gave us the ability to put away idols, prepare our hearts to the Lord, and serve him only." Repentance is God's work and gift.

Do you think that when Samuel erected that stone, called the children together, and said, "The Lord helped us," that he wanted the children to think only about that stunning defeat of the Philistines when they turned tail and were defeated!? Don't you think so. When the parents saw that stone and told their children that the Lord helped them, they said, "The Lord helped us in that victory because the Lord gave us the victory *in the way of* our sorrow for sin and repentance before Him."

For *this* they thank Him! In *this* (repentance!) the Lord had remembered and helped them!

"Ebenezer! Hitherto hath the Lord helped us."

In the way of repentance, godly sorrow, God gives the victory and preserves His church. This is the help we need desperately: the grace of repentance. The church must lament after the Lord. But this is not enough. Repentance is needed! The church must put away idols if she is truly sorry, desires God's preserving care over her as a denomination.... "Godly sorrow leads to repentance." Sins of pride, materialism, pleasure-mindedness. "We have sinned! We were proud, carnal, self-seeking."

What is the evidence that God has helped the PRC? If we would look and listen to find proof among us that God yet preserves us as churches, what would it be? We must look for a people who live in daily, genuine repentance before the Lord. Real evidence of God's mighty help is a church that *lives* the gospel of grace—in the absolute conviction that salvation is all of grace, that we of ourselves are sinners (nothing but sinners), and that our only help, our only salvation, is in the free mercies of God—totally undeserved.

How we need that help! "Turn us, O God, and we shall be turned."

In this way, as the church lives in daily repentance, she has the victory.

We will not survive as churches unless we, by God's grace, worship in humility, depending on the sovereign grace which we preach.

If we survive as churches, it will not be with the attitude: "Thanks, Lord, that we're not like those other churches...." If we will survive, it will be with the attitude: "Lord, we are just like them, no different. We are worse than they are. Why do You spare us? Why do You preserve us? We deserve none of this! We deserve to be destroyed at the hands of all the enemies. In thy mercy, preserve us." In the way of repentance.

### A Great Power

If the *way* of Israel's deliverance is repentance, the *power* of their victory is the blood of the Lamb, covering their sins. The power behind the battle and all of God's work in delivering us is God's love and faithfulness to them who are in Jesus Christ.

God did not save Israel because of their repentance. No conditions needed to be fulfilled before the Lord saved them (one of the battles that we had to fight as churches, too). But God saved by and because of the one sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We must see that in the text. When Israel gathered to express their sorrow, when they were praying, crying, the Philistines came. But Israel did not despair. They did not conclude: "Our repentance must be of no use; God has not heard; He will destroy us anyway." Rather (as true repentance always does), they were humbled further and expressed dependence on God. "Samuel, cease not to cry...."

Samuel, faithful leader and priest that he was, said: "Bring me a lamb, a little sucking lamb, innocent and pure and without blem-

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ish." And after they slit the throat and shed the blood of that lamb, placed it on the altar and started it on fire, the smoke of the lamb ascended. God smelled the savor of that sacrifice. And as the sacrifice was burning and the Philistines were coming, God heard the prayers of the people.

But be clear here: God did not hear them saying, "O Jehovah, save us because we are sorry." Or: "Lord, save us—and we ought to be saved because we really are not so bad." God heard their cries that said: "Faithful God, save us on the basis of the lamb that was slain." God heard that prayer, and He gave deliverance on the basis of that lamb on that altar on that day.

And when that memorial was set up and all the people gathered after the victory was won, and the parents were telling their children what happened, if they were faithful parents they would not only say: "Did you see the terrible thunderstorm?" They would not only say: "God worked repentance in us." They would *also* say: "Did you see what Samuel did? An innocent little lamb, without guilt, pollution, or any filth, was slain for our sakes. And we look forward to the day when God will send His Lamb—the real one—the final high priest, for our sins. We must trust in Him."

If we have *done* anything as churches; if we *are* anything as PRC; if we *shall be* (if the Lord tarries) anything, be it known to us all that it is only by the grace and blood of the Lamb.

Have we gained any victories? Conquered any enemies? Snatched out of the hand of the enemy any souls (in missions) to make them members of a true church and worship according to the Word of God? Have we exposed and rooted out any foreign agent, comforted any souls, lifted any burdens, corrected any erring brother, defended truth against error, or the way of holiness against corruption? Let it be

known that the power of the church in all her labors is the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. We have done nothing and shall do nothing except by the Lamb!

But how so by the Lamb? How does the Lamb discomfit the enemy? How does He put them to flight? How are others drawn in and saved? By the *preaching* of the Lamb and His blood! By faithful, pure, heartfelt, preaching of the grace of God in the Lord Jesus—slain!

The PRC preach Christ, *slain from before the foundation of the world*, because God loves His church and determined in eternity that she will be saved. What *routing* of the devil by that Word! What thunderbolts that drive away the enemy! When that Word is preached, the enemy knows he can do nothing to destroy the church, because before the world was made, God had the church in His heart and said about her: I will save her! I am the Rock beneath her! What *comfort* for the church of Christ! It shall always be in the world, and never be destroyed! Because the Lamb has been slain in eternity! What *occasion* for the people of God to *worship in humility*, to gather with their children in gladness: God has chosen us from before the foundation of the world, not because of our goodness, but in spite of our sinfulness!

The PRC preach Christ crucified as *substitutionary atonement* for all our sins, so that no works merit God's favor, but salvation comes by Christ alone! What *comfort* is that word for poor sinners fleeing before the enemy! What a driving away of guilty consciences! What routing of those who accuse: "You don't belong to the church, you will not be part of it in the end because of your sins!" We shout with the apostle: "Who can lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth! It

Let it be known  
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in all her labors  
is the blood  
of the Lord  
Jesus Christ.

is Christ who died...." We are part of the church covered by the blood of the Lamb!

The PRC preach this Christ crucified as *risen, ascended, and poured out* through His Spirit, empowering His church to serve Him. By Him we can have the victory over sin, we are able to defeat indwelling sins. Thus, when on a Sunday evening we are strong in faith but Monday morning weak and wondering, we remember the word: "I am God, faithful; you have strength in

Me." Thus, when we see the enemy coming, and when we are fearful he will enslave us, and we say, "I can't stand before him; I'm going to fall," we look to the blood of the Lamb slain. Under that blood every day the people of God come. Because of the preaching of that blood we may say, "Hitherto the Lord hath helped us."

How can it be *explained* that there is still a PRC in America? Preaching! Thus, although we do not forget for a moment the faithful elders and deacons of past days, we are especially thankful for the seminary and the pastors who have preached that gospel of sovereign grace all these years.

What must we *maintain* if we pray that the PRC continue until the Lord returns? Preaching! For this the Protestant Reformed Churches are known. For this we are not proud, but grateful.

Yes, we do that in weakness, because the messengers are but men—weak, sinful men. But we repent of that weakness, too, and beseech God (ask the prophets to cease not to cry to God for us) to forgive us, strengthen our pastors to know the Word, and give us students whose hearts are right with God, so that they may be able to preach the gospel of sovereign grace.

If we *are* anything as PRCs; if we shall *remain* anything as faith-

ful and true churches; if we shall *do anything further* as PRCs, it shall be through the Lamb slain....

But then it will not be by using preaching, or precious Reformed doctrines, as "magic charms," as though we may suppose that all we need to do is say the right words in the preaching. It was possible for Israel to fall into that sin: They would take the ark, and then assume all would be well. They had done it before; God had fought for them; He will do so now. It is possible for the PRC to do so. Then all the concern is for right words said, the name of Christ mentioned, the antithesis spoken, Reformed formulae repeated regularly. But there is no heart and love for these truths.... And no victory then either.

Nor will the victory be without prayer. Israel prayed, crying to God from their hearts. Indeed, it was through Samuel, their intercessor. They begged Samuel not to stop praying for them. But they prayed. And through prayer—crying unto God, ceasing not to cry unto God—God gave them victory. That was the difference between the battle against the Philistines 20 years before, and this battle by Mizpeh. Then they had only the symbol of God's grace in the ark with them; now, they have the reality. Then, the spiritual guides, carnal Hophni and Phinehas; now, spiritual Samuel. Then, they rushed into the fight, unconcerned about their sins; now, they have a sense of them, having confessed them and obtained a sense of pardon. Then, puffed up by vain presumption, they went out in their own strength; now, animated by a calm, confident hope, trusting in God.

Thus, when the Philistines draw near, an unseen ladder comes down from heaven on which angels descend to fight for them. The smoke and blood of the Lamb establish them as a mighty people and army of God.

### "Hitherto...."

Israel and Samuel erect a memorial, called Ebenezer. The purpose of the memorial? To recognize God's help in the past, and memorialize it and perpetuate the memory of it for future generations.

"Hitherto" needs the emphasis here. "Hitherto" looks way back, and links the present deliverance to all the past ones, and forms a testimony to the enduring faithfulness of God. "Hitherto" refers not only to the battle of that day, or to the preceding repentance, or even to the sacrifice. "Hitherto" includes these, but also points back to all the days of Israel's history. Thus far, in all these things, the Lord has helped us!

"But that is a strange word to use here," some might object. "Samuel," some critics might have said, "don't you remember what happened on this ground 20 years ago? Are you forgetting the Philistines' horrible victory? Eli's tragic death? The wife of Phinehas appropriately naming their child, 'The Glory has Departed'? Samuel, you ought to say, 'Finally,' or 'Now the Lord has helped.' But don't say: 'Thus far!'...." But Samuel did not say: "Finally," or "Now, God has helped us...." But rather, "All the way back and up till now...."


Had they objected so, Samuel would have preached: Do you not remember 20 years ago? The Lord was helping us then, too. His love is everlasting, His mercy endureth forever, His grace does not change! Do you not know that, because you are Israel, and your purpose is a high purpose—to be molded and formed and shaped into a people that knows and proclaims the truth of the living God—that sometimes you need not only victories but defeats? And do you not understand, when (now) God awakens in you a sense of sin in your heart, that 20 years ago you needed that defeat, so that you would lament? Though

God's hand was a heavy hand, and that way was a painful way, and being without the ark was not what we would have chosen, that's what God did because He loved His church.

Don't you see—you must not say: "Now finally..." but "hitherto," all the way back so every work of God forms another link in the chain back to creation. Whether that's a mercy and victory... or chastisement and painful defeat (personally or ecclesiastically), the Lord is helping us because the Lord is God and will do for His church what He must do.

A silver vessel, destined for a high purpose, is passed through the fire not once, but three or four times, because of the high destiny the vessel has. So the church. Her destiny? The highest—to show forth the praises of Him who called her out of darkness into His great light. But we don't do that easily, quickly, immediately. God does a great work upon us, helping us—sometimes through the fire. He's our Rock, our Help.

Happy is the people who, believing the faithfulness and love of God, can take such a view today. Happy always! Rejoicing evermore! Understand this!

So let us listen to stories of the aged saints. Not just to the stories of the victories... but of the battles, the losses, the defeats. Of 1924. Of 1953. Of the shame, sorrow, pain—the stories of division within, loss of families, churches, officebearers.... And then "bracket" all of that (what God has done for us as church and personally—both sorrow and joy) under the word: "Hitherto...." He has helped, shall help. He's our Rock. Unchangeably the same in Jesus Christ. 



# 2001 Synod of the PRC

**T**he 2001 synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches (PRC) met at First Church, Grand Rapids, Michigan from June 12 - 19.

The pre-synodical worship service was led by Rev. Barry Gritters, president of the previous synod. He preached on I Samuel 7:12: "Hitherto hath the LORD helped us."

Officers of the synod were Rev. Charles Terpstra (Holland, MI), president; Rev. James Slopsema (First, Grand Rapids, MI), vice-president; Rev. Steven Key (Hull, IA), first clerk; and Rev. Ron Cammenga (Southwest, Grandville, MI), second clerk.

## Seminary

A highlight of the synod was the oral examination of Mr. Angus Stewart, a senior seminarian at the Protestant Reformed Seminary. The Covenant Protestant Reformed Church in Northern Ireland requested that synod examine Mr. Stewart, a member of this congregation. Covenant delegated two elders to attend the synod in order to observe the examination, Mr. John Clarke and Mr. Jonathan McAuley. Mr. Stewart preached a specimen sermon before the synod on Zechariah 4:9, 10: "Who hath despised the day of small things?" He was then examined in dogmatics, knowledge of Scripture, knowledge of the confessions, knowledge of church history, knowledge of the church order, and practical matters of his own salvation, godly walk, and conviction of his call to the gospel ministry. Synod approved the examination of Mr. Stewart. It informed the sister church in

Northern Ireland that Mr. Stewart successfully sustained a thorough examination and that he is fully qualified for the gospel ministry and, therefore, worthy to be declared eligible for a call. The Covenant Church plans to call Mr. Stewart as her pastor in a short while.

The graduation exercises for Mr. Stewart were held of an evening during the meeting of synod. Present were the delegates of synod, members of the Theological School Committee, the faculty of the seminary, the family of the graduate and his wife, and many friends and members of the PRC. Prof. Robert Decker spoke on the "Minister and Polemics." This address is printed elsewhere in this issue of the *Standard Bearer*. Elder John Clarke addressed the gathering, thanking the PRC for their training of Mr. Stewart. He presented a fine watch to Mr. Stewart and a gift of money to the PRC in appreciation for the work of the churches on behalf of the church in Northern Ireland. We also print Mr. Clarke's remarks in this issue.

Part of the graduation program was the public recognition of the completion of his seminary training by Rev. Lau Chin Kwee, pastor of the First Evangelical Reformed Church of Singapore. Pastor Lau was awarded his degree *in absentia*.

In other decisions relating to the seminary, synod approved admission to the seminary in the fall of 2001 of two men from the PRC and of one man from the Evangelical Reformed Churches of Singapore (ERCS). It approved the transfer of the rectorship of the

seminary, by rotation, to Prof. Russ Dykstra for three years. The Theological School Committee (TSC) reported to synod that Prof. Robert Decker will have a partial sabbatical this coming year in order to develop a seminary course in world religions. He will teach a course in homiletics.

The report of the TSC included a report on the denominational archives by archivist Jon J. Huiskens. This report will be of interest widely among the readership of the *SB*.

The denominational archives collection continues to grow. The papers of Rev. John A. Heys and Rev. C. Hanks have been accessed. Materials from the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration have also been placed in the archives. A complete index of all the materials that are stored in the archives has been updated and is available to those who may want to use materials from the archives. This collection is important as a record of the history, development, and work of the denomination. The archivist is always looking for historical documents, pictures, etc. that may be of worth to keep there. Churches are also encouraged to care for their own archives so that individual histories of our congregations will also be available. Personal papers both of clergy and others in the denomination would be welcome additions to this collection. Of particular interest to the archivist is the needed recovery of materials relating to defunct churches—Rock Valley, Orange City, Oskaloosa, Waupun—to name a few. Anyone who has knowledge of the existence of the records of these churches is urged to contact the archivist. Another reminder that before anyone

throws anything away that might be of relevance to our denominational or congregational histories, please contact the archivist.

The archives of the PRC are kept in a special, fireproof, and temperature-controlled room in the seminary building.

### **Foreign Missions**

Rev. Richard Moore, missionary to Ghana, West Africa, was present at synod during deliberations on this field. He addressed synod regarding the work. Synod instructed the Hull, IA PRC to call a second missionary for the Ghana field. The Foreign Mission Committee (FMC) was told to work with the missionary to plan for the instruction of Ghanaian men to become pastors and leaders in the mission in Ghana.

Another weighty decision regarding foreign missions was the decision to declare the Philippines a mission field of the PRC and to proceed with the calling of a missionary for this field. Grounds included that the PRC have been visiting the field for five years, that three groups have expressed desire for a missionary from the PRC, and that work in the Philippines has developed to the point that a missionary is necessary. The missionary is to be stationed in Manila. In making this decision, synod rejected a minority report of the committee of pre-advice that studied the recommendation of the FMC. The minority report advised against calling a missionary to the Philippines at this time on the grounds, among others, of the shortage of ministers in the PRC and of the burden of much higher synodical assessments for our people. Synod appointed the Doon, IA PRC as the calling church for the Philippines.

### **Domestic Mission Committee**

Synod heard reports from its Domestic Mission Committee (DMC) on the work in Spokane,

WA, in Pittsburgh, PA, and in Fayetteville, NC. The DMC approved the overture to synod by home missionary Rev. Thomas Miersma concerning several aspects of the work of the missionary. Synod adopted the proposals in Rev. Miersma's overture. It declared that missionaries may administer both the sacraments, but specifically the Lord's Supper, subject to the approval of the calling church and concurrence of the respective mission committees, in instituted churches which are the regular objects of our preaching and mission work and are actively seeking affiliation with our denomination and which differ merely in non-essentials. It also declared that missionaries may pronounce the votum, salutation, and benediction on the mission field, with the approval of the calling church and concurrence of the respective mission committees, in either an unorganized group or instituted church, where such pronouncement is in conjunction with the regular administration of the Word in an established object of mission work.

Adoption of the overture required synod's decision that the synod of 1956 erred in the policy it adopted by its disapproval of Rev. George Lubbers' administration of the sacraments and pronouncement of the benediction in his missionary labors in Loveland, CO.

Rev. Miersma was present at synod to defend his overture. He was given opportunity to address synod on the work in Spokane.

### **Contact Committee**

Synod approved another conference of its Committee for Contact with Other Churches (CC) with the Committee for Ecumenical Relations and Church Unity of the United Reformed Churches. This conference will discuss the scope of the covenant and the relation between election and the covenant. Synod also authorized the CC to continue discussions with the Committee for Ecumenicity and Inter-

Church Relations of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. These discussions will treat the issue of the "well-meant offer of the gospel" and other issues that separate the two denominations.

The CC reported that it is considering the possibility of closer contact with the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Australia (EPC). Synod approved a conference with the EPC in the summer of 2002. The EPC has requested that the PRC conduct a ministers' post-graduate seminar in Australia. Having sent several men to the Protestant Reformed Seminary for theological training, the EPC expressed its appreciation to the PRC for their support of the Australian students. On its part, synod conveyed to the EPC the gratitude of the PRC for the contact they may have with that Presbyterian church.

Synod approved new contact already made with the First Presbyterian Church of Rowlett, Texas. It also approved initiating contact with the Orthodox Christian Reformed Church.

The CC reported on relations with the Covenant Protestant Reformed Church in Northern Ireland, a sister church. Mr. Jonathan McAuley, an elder in the Covenant Church, addressed synod on behalf of that congregation, bringing greetings and expressing thanks to the PRC for help that the churches have given. We publish his remarks elsewhere in this issue. It is expected that Mr. Angus Stewart will soon be called by the Covenant Church as her pastor.

In its treatment of the report of the CC regarding the Evangelical Reformed Churches of Singapore (ERCS), synod took note of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Rev. Jason Kortering's ordination into the ministry of the gospel. Synod expressed to Rev. and Mrs. Kortering "our gratitude to God for their forty years of faithful labor on behalf of the gospel in our Protestant Reformed Churches and in our sis-



ter churches, the Evangelical Reformed Churches of Singapore."

In response to the report of the CC that the First Evangelical Reformed Church of Singapore has adopted a "position paper" approving the remarriage of divorced persons on the grounds of adultery and desertion, synod approved the action of the CC in informing the ERCS that adoption of the position taken in the position paper "would jeopardize their sister-church relationship with the PRC." In addition, synod drew up and adopted a letter that is to be sent to the ERCS concerning this matter, which synod judged to be "so urgent and serious."

#### Church Order Study Committee (Art. 69)

Synod received and treated the report of a special synodical study committee, to which the synod of 2000 had given the following mandate:

Synod refer(s) that part of Edgerton [MN]'s overture dealing with possible revision of Article 69 of the Church Order back to the Church Order Study Committee for further study and recommendations to synod 2001. Their report should spell out the biblical principles regarding singing in worship, the historical intent of

Article 69, our current practice, as well as the discussion and decisions made by our churches in 1960-1962....

Article 69 of the Church Order of Dordt, which is 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.

The special study committee came to this year's synod with a majority report and a minority report. The majority report proposed that Article 69 be changed to read: "In the churches only the 150 Psalms of David shall be sung, along with the Lord's Prayer, the Songs of Mary, Zacharias, and Simeon, and the doxologies." The minority report proposed that Article 69 be changed to read: "In the churches only versifications of the 150 Psalms shall be sung." Synod rejected the proposals of both reports. The result is that the original Article 69 is retained as the rule that governs the singing of the PRC at public worship. As some of the delegates observed, the re-

sult is also that the PRC are left without the clear statement of the biblical principles regarding singing in worship that the synod of 2000 desired.

#### Other Matters

In closed session, synod judged an appeal against his consistory's discipline of him by a member of one of the churches. It approved the organization of a new Protestant Reformed congregation in Hudsonville, MI, the Trinity PRC. From its Yearbook Committee, synod heard that for the first time in many years, the membership of the PRC declined during this past year, from 1659 families to 1647 families. Synod adopted a synodical budget of \$845 per family, an increase of more than \$100 over last year. Southwest PRC in Grandville, MI will host next year's synod.

Such was the will of synod 2001, subject to the will of God, in some of the decisions taken. A complete account of the actions of synod, complete with grounds, will be available in the forthcoming, official "Acts of Synod."

May God bless the PRC, preserving them in the truth and prospering their work.

— DJE 

## Feature Articles

# The Minister and Polemics\*

*Prof. Robert Decker*

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

\*Seminary Commencement, June 14, 2001, First Protestant Reformed Church, Grand Rapids. Graduate: Angus Stewart.

**P**olemics may be defined as "the art or science of defending the truth which has as its object the refutation of errors." Polemics is a bad word among the churches of these days.

Toleration is the good word! We ought to tolerate differing views and doctrines because no one

has a corner on the truth. Evangelicals can even get together with Roman Catholics. What is much worse is the fact that much of the church tolerates the world religions. In the past the so-called good elements in Islam, Hinduism, and the others were ascribed to God's so-called common grace.

Now we're told that the world religions are on a par with Christianity. These religions are merely different paths to the same God and heaven. Error and heresy are forgotten words among the churches. And, as regards Christian living, nothing is considered sin anymore.

Polemics, I submit to you, is a good word, a very good word indeed! It is so because it refers to a necessary, significant aspect of the minister's calling! This is evident from the emphasis on it in Scripture. In Matthew 24: 24, Jesus speaks of false Christs and false prophets arising in the New Testament era. These shall show great signs and wonders, so great, that, if it were possible, they would deceive the very elect! False prophets plagued the church all through the Old Testament era, Balaam being the prime example. And there is the warning against false teachers in II Peter 2:1-9 and its parallel in Jude.<sup>1</sup>

This biblical emphasis is reflected in the Formula of Subscription, the Church Order, and the Form of Ordination of Ministers used in the Protestant Reformed Churches. All of these point to the minister's calling, not only to refute and contradict errors, but also to exert themselves in keeping the church free from such errors.

It is this aspect of the minister's calling we wish to examine a bit tonight. Yes, we do so with brother Stewart in mind. Not because we fear he will not engage in polemics in his ministry, but to encourage him in this necessary aspect of the minister's task. And we do so for the benefit of the churches represented here tonight! Should the churches fail in this aspect of their calling, they will gradually, but inevitably, grow weak doctrinally and spiritually, until finally they lose altogether the marks of the true church of Jesus Christ.

It is necessary for the minister to engage in polemics because of the presence of false teachers in the church. They are always present!

That's the apostle's argument in II Peter 2. There were false prophets in the Old Testament. All through the Old Testament era there were false prophets in distinction from true prophets. Never was there a time when the Old Testament church was free from these false prophets. And, just as there were these false prophets in the Old Testament, there will be false teachers among you of the New Testament era. Peter doesn't write, if you happen to encounter false teachers be warned. Rather he writes, these shall be among you! It's inevitable; they will always be there.

And these are *false* teachers! These false teachers are not ignorantly in error. They are not to be regarded as sincere Christians who just don't know any better. The Bible calls them "ungodly men,"<sup>2</sup> "enemies of the cross of Christ, whose god is their belly."<sup>3</sup> They are enemies of the faith and of God and His Christ and His Spirit of Truth and His church. The nature of these teachers is false. They oppose and deny the truth of the Word of God. They speak deliberate falsehoods. They are lying, deceitful men who aim to lead the people of God astray and thus destroy the church.

Further evidence of their false nature is the fact that they are motivated by covetousness. With feigned words they intend to make merchandise of God's people. In plain words they are out to make money off their followers. Lots of it! And I don't have to tell you there are many false teachers doing just that these days.

These false teachers introduce damnable heresies. Literally, they bring in "heresies of destruction," hence they are damnable. These heresies are the very opposite of the truth. Heresies weaken the saints. Sooner or later, but inevitably, they destroy the church! The truth, on the other hand, edifies, strengthens, sanctifies the church.

The damnable heresies are legion these days. Among them are

the denial of inspiration/infallibility of Scripture and, therefore, its absolute authority; the denial of the historicity of Genesis 1-11 (the passage contains myths or it can be properly understood only under a "framework hypothesis"); the denial of sovereign, double predestination; the denial of limited atonement (universalism is taught or, at the very least, it is said, that God desires that all be saved); the command, call, and particular promise of the gospel is replaced with a well-meant offer of the gospel; preaching as the chief means of grace and the essence of Reformed, biblical worship is denied. And the list could be made much longer.

The worst of it all is that these false teachers even deny the Lord that bought them! This cannot mean that at one point they were actually bought by the blood of Jesus and saved in Him, but then later became false teachers and thus fell away. What it does mean is this, that outwardly they profess to be not only children of God bought with the blood of Jesus, but pastors and teachers in the church, while in actual fact, by their damnable heresies they deny the Lord that bought them.

This is one reason, the main one, why these teachers are so terribly dangerous and wicked. It does not matter which aspect of the truth they deny, because every heresy is a denial of God and His Christ and His Holy Spirit of Truth. One cannot lay his finger on a single passage of Scripture without touching God! Deny Genesis 1 and 2, e.g., and one denies the Creator God and His Christ by whom and for whom all things were made and the Holy Spirit who inspired that sacred record of the origins of the heavens and the earth and all that is in them.

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1. Cf. also, Romans 16:17-18; Philippians 3:17-19; I Timothy 4:1-3; II Timothy 4:3-4.

2. Jude 3

3. Philippians 3:18-19.



These false teachers pose an extremely dangerous threat to the church on at least two counts.

Their mode of operation is secret! They "privily bring in damnable heresies."<sup>4</sup> This is the way they operate. They are never out in the open. If they were open and honest, their damnable heresies would be easily discerned and the false teachers could be quickly put out of the church. So they operate secretly. They mix in just enough truth to make the error sound and look like the truth! They use "feigned words." They forge or shape their words to make them look like the truth, while in fact they are lies! They are words intended to deceive the church. Ephesians 4 says they use the "sleight of men, cunning craftiness, by which they lie in wait to deceive!" Thus they are able, as Jude puts it, "to creep into the church unawares."

And many follow their pernicious ways. Those pernicious ways are the fruit of their heresies. Those pernicious ways are ways of unbridled lust, outrageous, shameless wantonness, lasciviousness. False teaching, make no mistake about it, always yields the fruit of ungodly practices.

The pernicious ways are legion these days: Sabbath desecration; abandoning of the proper, biblical worship of the thrice holy God; the mad pursuit of pleasures of sin and of the money needed to buy those pleasures.

But those pernicious ways are especially the flagrant forms of the transgression of the seventh Commandment of God's Law: fornication and adultery; pornography in books, magazines, movies, and on the Internet! Is this why so many of the churches are plagued with divorce and the remarriage of divorced people these days? *Indeed! That and worse!* For those pernicious ways now come to expression in homosexuality and lesbianism, the most flagrant expression of the reprobate mind possible, according to Romans 1.

Many follow them! Not a few, but many, the vast majority, while the true church remains but a tiny remnant, hated, scorned, persecuted. By reason of this the way of truth is evil spoken of, blasphemed. The way of biblical truth in which the true church of Christ worships and lives is blasphemed by the false teachers and the many who follow their pernicious ways.

If you, brother Stewart, are to engage in polemics *you need to know God's truth!* Which means, of course, that you need carefully and prayerfully to study the Scriptures. Scripture testifies of itself, "All Scripture is given by the inspiration of God"<sup>5</sup>; and "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."<sup>6</sup> Because Scripture is divinely inspired, it is profitable (useful) for doctrine, reproof, correction, instruction in righteousness.... Nothing else is profitable for doctrine. Scripture, therefore, is the absolute rule for the faith and life of the Christian.

This then is your calling as a minister of the Word: "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth!"<sup>7</sup> "Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them."<sup>8</sup> When you leave the seminary, it is to spend a lifetime in the prayerful, faithful study of Holy Scripture. Only when you are faithful to this calling will you be able to know the truth and refute the errors of the false teachers. This is God's armor, the sword of the Spirit. God's Word is our only weapon and our only defense!

Second, in your study of the Scriptures you must be guided by the confessions of the church. The Three Forms of Unity summarize and set forth systematically the doctrines of Holy Scripture as these determine the life of the Christian in his pilgrimage! They are the work of the church of the past as she was led by the Holy Spirit to a proper understanding of the *truth* of Scripture, and that, too, as she

was forced by false teachers to examine the Scriptures and refute the errors and expound the truth. Hence, if you are going to refute the heretical teachings of the false teachers you must immerse yourself in the confessions of the churches.

Third, you must prayerfully and carefully study the writings of the theologians and fathers of the church. A faithful minister reads deeply and widely so that he knows the struggles and battles of the church of the past. He continues to read and study the great dogmaticians and expositors of the Scriptures. Without this he will be unable to refute the multitude of errors which have always been and continue to be a threat to the church of Christ.

Finally and obviously, if you are going to refute them, you must know the errors of the false teachers! The people to whom we minister must not be *of* the world, but they are *in* the world, and because they cannot escape being *in* the world, they need to be warned of the false doctrines that abound and the sinful life-styles which flow from those damnable heresies. So you need to read the theological journals and a variety of religious and church magazines. You need to read the contemporary theologians too. You need a good grasp of what's going on in the world.

And, yes, hear it once more: Make preaching your priority! Preaching remains the chief means of grace. And grace is the only power that will keep you and God's people from being led away with the error of the wicked. Even this precious truth is under severe attack in our times. Preaching has fallen on very hard times. Do not let that deter you from preaching!

4. II Peter 2:1.

5. II Timothy 3:16-17.

6. II Peter 1:21.

7. II Timothy 2:15.

8. I Timothy 4:15.

Be didactic in your preaching! Be doctrinal! Develop the concepts of the text or Lord's Day and thus lay out the doctrines of the Word of God. Say nothing more or less than what the text says, and then show the congregation in the clearest of terms how those doctrines determine how they are to live before God in their homes, in the church, in the work place, in school, and in their recreation.

While you are thus laying out the truth from God's Word, be sharply polemical in your preaching. Tell the congregation how the truth is denied. Expose and refute the errors with the Scriptures. Do so both as regards the false doctrines and as regards the life and

practice. Some will no doubt be critical of this kind of preaching. Do not be surprised at this. Do not be dismayed. Continue in this polemical preaching.

Therein lies God's blessing for His precious church! Both II Peter 2 and Jude make clear that God will not allow these false teachers to destroy His church. He will swiftly bring them into judgment and damnation! They bring upon themselves swift destruction. God is *just*! Both passages make this abundantly clear. God spared not the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell. God did not spare the old world but destroyed it with a flood. God turned Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes. God will

surely and swiftly bring the false teachers into judgment as well.

And God will surely save His church. II Peter 2 makes this abundantly clear as well. God saved Noah by means of the flood. God delivered Lot from Sodom. God knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust into the day of judgment to be punished. God will surely save His church. Remember, God will do that with the means He Himself has provided.

Be then, beloved brother, a faithful minister! Preach the Word in and out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering! That's God's charge to you!



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## Address to Synod on Behalf of CPRC (NI)

*Elder Jonathan McAuley*

**I**t gives us great pleasure to address the synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches of America and to bring you the greetings of the consistory, council, and congregation of Covenant Protestant Reformed Church in Northern Ireland. We extend to you our greetings in the most blessed name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

We are greatly indebted to the Protestant Reformed Churches and in particular to the consistory and congregation of Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church who by the grace of our great God have continued to show great interest in our welfare and development and have provided much assistance to us over the past year. The care and attention they have provided have been a source of great encouragement to us all. As you will be

aware, Covenant Protestant Reformed Church in Northern Ireland has just come through a very trying and difficult period in our short existence as a congregation. Whilst we have been very conscious of God's continued blessing upon us, many found this past year particularly difficult. We know and believe, however, that "whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth," and we are convinced that God will not see us defeated but will continue to strengthen His people. The advice and wise counsel provided to us by Hudsonville consistory and the Mission Committee through Rev. Gritters, Rev. Koole, and Rev. VanOverloop have enabled us to move forward and find resolution of the problems. We continue in the assurance that God loves His people both here and in Northern Ireland and that He will continue

to protect and provide for His church.

We want to thank the Contact Committee for their work with us and for your continued financial support and assistance, without which we would face severe hardship.


It is a great joy for us to be with you, especially as you prepare to examine our student, Mr. Angus Stewart. God has greatly blessed both you and us by enabling you as a denomination not only to prepare men to preach the gospel here in your own land, but also to ensure that the gospel will be preached in lands across the world. We want to thank the professors and the Theological School Committee for the work they have done in preparing Mr. Stewart for this day. We eagerly await his answers to your questions and pray that



God will provide him with the ability to do justice to the work that has gone into his preparation.

Lastly, we want again publicly

to thank our great God and dear heavenly Father for all that He has done both for you and for us. We earnestly pray that He will continue to bless the ministers and

people of the Protestant Reformed Churches in America and that in all they do Christ Jesus may be glorified. 

# Speech at the Graduation Exercises of the PR Seminary

Elder John Clarke

**B**rothers and sisters, may I first of all bring to you greetings from the Covenant Protestant Reformed Church in Northern Ireland and also express to you our thanks for the invitation to participate in this joyful and special occasion, when we celebrate together the graduation of our beloved brother, Angus Stewart. For all of these involved this is indeed a time to be joyful, a time to be glad and to rejoice in what God has done in our midst. Something very important has taken place. Something highly significant. A young man has been trained for the gospel ministry. He has successfully passed his examinations. In God's will, he will soon receive God's call through His church to be a minister of the gospel.

"So what!" the world would say, "that's no big deal. If he were about to become the next president of the United States, that would be important. If he had won last week's general election in the United Kingdom and were the new

Prime Minister, that would be significant. But just being trained to be a preacher — that is of little or no consequence."

Beloved, you and I miserable sinners, who have heard the voice of Christ calling us to Himself through His servants, know that there is nothing more important in the entire world than the calling to preach the gospel. We thank God that He continues to hear the prayers of His church and sends forth laborers into the great harvest field that is ripe and ready to harvest.

You in the Protestant Reformed Churches can rejoice and be thankful tonight that God has given to you the opportunity of training a young man for this great work. Someone from a different country, from a different continent, from a different background has been brought by God into your midst to be taught by you. This is a great privilege but also a serious responsibility. You can rejoice tonight that God has kept you faithful to Himself and the truth of the Reformed faith, and has enabled you to carry out that task faithfully. When Angus returns to Northern Ireland and makes use of and applies the training that you have given him, you can have confidence that he will be preaching the true gospel. Earnestly contending for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. You can stand before God and with all boldness

you can say that if Angus Stewart preaches the gospel he has been taught by us, then both he and we will be free from the blood of all those who hear him preach. There are not many seminaries which can say that today. That is not a reason to be proud, but a cause for humble gratitude.

There can be no doubt that the one who graduates, Angus Stewart, has reason to rejoice. Like all others who graduate, he can rejoice that after four years of strenuous effort and conscientious studies he has passed his examination and is ready to take up the work for which he has been trained. But Angus, you have a great reason for rejoicing. You have been trained, as I have already said, for a very important work. In God's will you will be the instrument that He uses to bring the good news of salvation to lost, hell-deserving sinners, the instrument that He will use to comfort and encourage His weary sin-burdened people. To some a savor of life unto life, and to others of death unto death. What a wonderful yet awesome task! Rejoice that God has given you the desire for this work; be thankful that He has given you the necessary gifts to perform it. Reflect on the marvelous providence of God that has brought you from Stewartstown to Grand Rapids to receive the excellent preparation that you have been given.

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*Mr. Clarke is an elder in the Covenant Protestant Reformed Church in Ballymena, Northern Ireland. He spoke as an official representative of this church, a sister church of the PRC. The graduate is a son of the Ballymena congregation.*

We are glad that Angus' parents are able to be with us tonight. I want you to know that you have reason to rejoice tonight also. I realize that over the past four years you have not always felt like rejoicing. You have been separated from Angus, you have felt a sense of loss, you have been anxious — is he doing the right thing? Why does he need to go to America to train for the ministry, who are the Protestant Reformed Churches? What future does he have in a small church in Ballymena? I hope that, now that you have become better acquainted with the saints here and in Ballymena, some of those fears have been dispelled. Tonight, you can rejoice that God has given you a son who walks in the ways of the Lord and whose desire it is to serve Him with all of his being, a son who has shown by successfully completing a rigorous course of studies that God has given him determination, diligence, and a willingness for hard work.

If there is any group of people that have more cause than others for rejoicing, it is CPRC in Ballymena. This is a very special occasion for us. It is a great joy for us to see a son of our congregation be so thoroughly and faithfully trained for the ministry. We eagerly anticipate that in a few weeks, if it be God's will, Angus will receive a call from our church to become our first minister. Those of you who have had the experience of not having your own minister for a long period of time will understand what that will mean for us. Every church needs to have its own pastor. At this point let me make it clear that we are not ungrateful for all the help that we have received from the PRCs. We appreciate the sending of different ministers to supply our pulpit. We are also thankful that you sent Rev. Hanko to us, first as a missionary and then as a pastor on loan. But as Reformed Christians who believe in the Presbyterian form of church government, we will all

agree that it should be the objective of every local church to call its own minister. Brothers and sisters of the Protestant Reformed Churches, you have, by God's grace, in training Angus in the Protestant Reformed faith that we share, made that possible for us. We are indebted to you. We are thankful that in these days of apostasy God has preserved a seminary that adheres without wavering to the Reformed confessions.


Others in the church-world might ask, why do you send your student to America to be trained? Are not the seminaries in Northern Ireland, with its great Presbyterian traditions, or the seminaries of Scotland, the home of Presbyterianism, better than this little PRC seminary? The answer is no. We are only too aware of the problems and weaknesses of the seminaries in our land and also throughout the United Kingdom. I do not think it is any exaggeration to say that there are few, if any, preachers in Northern Ireland, both past and present, who have received such a thorough training for the ministry in Northern Ireland.

Most of the people who have made that possible are here tonight, and I would like on behalf of our congregation to thank you for what you have done. First, I would like to thank the professors who are at the coal face in this important work, and also the Theological School Committee who oversee this vital aspect of your church's labors. We have witnessed the fruit of those faithful labors during Angus' examination at synod.

During his four-year stay here, Angus has attended Hudsonville PRC. He has told us on different occasions how warmly he has been received into their fellowship and all the practical ways in which the members have helped him. I would also like to thank Rev. Gritters and the consistory of Hudsonville for permitting Angus to do his internship with you. I

know that this involved extra work for Rev. Gritters, and we appreciate all the wise counsel that he has given to Angus. The experience gained during his internship will be very useful to Angus and beneficial to our congregation.

For Angus to go back to Northern Ireland, having graduated from the PRC seminary, is a great achievement. But Angus has achieved more than that. During his stay in America he has found a godly wife. We rejoice in that also. A few weeks ago, when Rev. Doug Kuiper was with us in Ballymena, we were discussing the qualifications for elders and the question as to whether the requirement that an elder be the husband of one wife meant that all elders and ministers should be married. We may disagree about that, but I am sure most of us will agree that normally it is better for a minister to be married. We believe that Mary will be a big help to Angus in his work and we look forward to having her with us in Ballymena. The fact that Mary will soon be leaving Grand Rapids to go to Northern Ireland may be a source of sadness rather than joy for her family and friends, but you know that she is not choosing Northern Ireland because of its well-watered plains. In other words, she is not going to Northern Ireland for material gain or for carnal reasons, but because she wants to be a help and encouragement to her husband in the great work of the ministry. In that, you too can rejoice.

Yet, while we can all rejoice as we stand at the dawn of a new ministry, this is just the first step. The work that in God's will Angus will take up in Ballymena will not be easy (is it every easy?). You have helped prepare him for this work. Now he needs your prayers. The church in Ballymena needs your prayers. Do not forget us. May God strengthen the bond that unites us and use us all for the furtherance of the gospel to the glory of His great name. 



Rev. S. Key,  
Clerk

Rev. C. Terpstra,  
President



# PRC SYNOD 2001





**PR**  
**SYNOD**  
*2001*



Rev. R. Moore







# GRADUATION 2001



From left to right;  
Graduate: Mr. Angus Stewart  
Mr. Jonathan McAuley  
Mr. John Clarke



# Report of the Committee for Contact with Other Churches

Mr. David Kregel

**T**he motion carries that a committee of correspondence be appointed to perform all preliminary work toward correspondence with the churches in the Netherlands. Revs. J. DeJong, H. Hoeksema, and G.M. Ophoff are appointed by the chair to serve on this committee" (Article 69, Acts of Synod, 1945). Sixty-one years ago, the Committee For Contact With Other Churches had its origin as a "committee of correspondence" with a very narrow mandate from synod. Over the ensuing years, both the committee itself, and, more importantly, its mandate, have grown.

In 1951, the committee was instructed by synod to draw up a constitution as a standing committee of synod. In 1953 that first constitution was adopted. It contained the charge to the committee to "study the advisability of entering into correspondence with certain churches or church federations, but only after Synod has charged it with some preliminary investigation." In 1972, a revised constitution expanded the duties of the committee. Not only were they to "carry out all mandates of synod with respect to the investigation and negotiation of contacts with

other churches," but now there was this added mandate: "The committee shall study the advisability of seeking official relationships with other churches, *even without any specific synodical mandate*; and when it deems this proper, it shall put forth every effort to contact such churches, in harmony with the principles and requirements set forth in this constitution." And what are these "principles"? The constitution describes them as these: "In general, Holy Scripture, together with the subordinate standards of the Protestant Reformed Churches in America. Specifically, the Heidelberg Catechism, Q&A 54, the Belgic Confession of Faith, Articles 27-29, the Church Order of the Protestant Reformed Churches, Article 85." Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, in writing to young Timothy describes the church as the "pillar and ground of the *truth*." The Catechism in answer 54 speaks of "...a church chosen to everlasting life, *agreeing in true faith*." The Belgic Confession (Article 27) says this of the church: it is "joined and united with heart and will, by the power of faith, *in one and the same spirit*." These principles must guide the committee in all its work, as we "seek to manifest the true unity and catholicity of the church on earth in as far as that is possible" (Constitution, Preamble).

The current makeup of the committee is as follows: Revs.

Ronald Cammenga, Kenneth Koole, and Ronald VanOverloop; Professors Robert Decker and Russell Dykstra, and Elders Norwin Brower, David Ondersma, and the undersigned. What follows is a short synopsis of our labors in the past year.

## Covenant Protestant Reformed Church of Northern Ireland

The difficult events of the past year in Northern Ireland have been chronicled by another writer in a recent issue of this magazine. The work of the Contact Committee now lies with the congregation itself. This is, in part, because synod 2000 decided fully to implement sister-church relationships with this congregation. With joy we can report that their commitment to the Reformed faith remains strong. They look forward with great anticipation to the day when they will have their own undershepherd. Angus Stewart graduated this spring from our seminary, and will be able soon to take up his labors there. At the request of Covenant, our synod conducted Sem. Stewart's examination. This examination was another blessed result of our sister-church relationship with Covenant. In the interim, the committee arranged for several of our ministers to travel to Northern Ireland over the past eight months. Rev. Gise VanBaren was also able to spend about six weeks there this past winter.

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Mr. Kregel is a member of Grandville PRC and serves on the denominational Contact Committee.



### Evangelical Reformed Church of Singapore

Rev. Kortering continues to be very busy. Again this year he took on added preaching and pastoral responsibilities in First ERCS while Pastor Lau finished his studies in our seminary. He also is busy in the mission work of the ERCS. In late March, he traveled to India for a week. Then, two weeks later, he went to Myanmar for a month to teach the pastors there. In addition there are Youth Group meetings, Theological Training Committee meetings, Joint Mission Committee meetings, and messages to prepare for the Family Camp. Pray that the Lord may continue to give Rev. Kortering the strength to continue his labors. Rev. Kortering's term in Singapore ends in June of 2002. To that end, Hope PRC Walker (the calling church) has sent out several calls for his replacement. We pray that the Lord will send the man of His choosing, in His time.

Acting on a recommendation of Rev. Kortering, the Contact Committee has combined three funds: Scholarship, Book, and Emergency, transferred them to the jurisdiction of the Synodical Treasurer, and set it up as an Endowment Fund. These monies can now be invested according to synodical guidelines, and should then provide an ongoing source of support for the Theological School of the ERCS.


### Conferences

The Committee has also been busy with conferences this past year. In keeping with synodical decisions of 1999 and 2000, we held a day-long conference with the Committee for Ecumenical Relations and Church Unity of the United Reformed Churches. This conference was held at our seminary on September 11, 2000. Papers were exchanged on the doctrine of the covenant, and also the confessional status of both the doctrine of the covenant and of common grace. A follow-up conference is tentatively scheduled for fall, 2001. The topics for discussion include the scope of the covenant and the relationship between election and the covenant.

Also in keeping with synodical decisions, we held a conference with a delegation from the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. The purpose of this meeting was the discussion of a set of propositions that had been drawn up by the respective committees. These propositions had to do with the preaching of the gospel and the free offer. A further discussion has been proposed for the coming year, the Lord willing. This discussion would center in the Murray-Stonehouse Report, which is the prevailing position in the OPC regarding the free offer of the gospel.

In March, a delegation of two committee members traveled to Rowlett (Dallas), Texas to visit the First Presbyterian Church. During this Friday to Monday visit, the delegation laid out for Pastor Richard Bacon and his Session our history, doctrinal positions, distinctive practices, and our organic life as PRC. We were very warmly received by both the Session and the entire congregation. Much agreement was found, specifically regarding God's sovereignty as it relates to salvation, creation, providence, and Scripture. It is the desire of our committee to develop this contact further.

Tentative plans also have been made for a conference with the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Australia to be held in Australia in the summer of 2002. Consideration is being given to inviting also the sister churches of the PRC, as well as some contacts which the EPC has.

In all of our conferences and contacts, our men speak forthrightly, without compromise, and without apology for the great heritage which the Lord in His grace has entrusted to our care. So few today stand with us in the Reformed faith. We ask for the prayers of the churches as we seek to "manifest the true unity and catholicity of the church" (Constitution, Preamble). 

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## Southwest PRC – 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

Mr. Phil Lotterman

**I**n thankful commemoration of God's faithfulness, Southwest Protestant Reformed Church is

pleased to announce the seventy-fifth anniversary of its organization. In celebration of this historic event, Southwest will hold an anniversary program the evening of September 7, 2001, D.V., beginning with a supper for their members and followed by a program of re-

membrance for the enjoyment of their members and members of the sister congregations. The theme of their celebration is "Thankful Commemoration of God's Faithfulness," and they have chosen Psalter number 408, a versification of Psalm 149 as their theme song.

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*Mr. Lotterman is a member of Southwest PRC.*

Southwest PRC was organized on July 12, 1926 as the Roosevelt Park Protestant Reformed Church, located at that time in the Roosevelt Park neighborhood of southwest Grand Rapids in the Grandville Ave. and Clyde Park area. Services were held in a rented (garage) building on Roosevelt St. hill. Their beginnings were small, numbering only nineteen families with fifty-four children and five individuals. The names of most of the charter members are not familiar to us now, although there are presently a few grandchildren of two of the charter members who are members today. And there are children of families who joined Roosevelt Park Church shortly after their organization who are also members today.

The congregation grew under the pastorates of Rev. Bernard Kok and Rev. Richard Veldman, so that during the decade of the thirties the congregation increased in number from twenty-seven families in 1930 to sixty-seven families in 1939. This was the decade of the great nationwide depression, and many of the men of the congregation were unable to work or worked at minimum wages at the area factories. Often the consistory was confronted with the "union question," and many times they met weekly into the late hours of the night to lead the congregation in the light of the Word of God.

The congregation found it necessary to erect a church building of their own on the corner of Ellen Avenue and Rathbone Street just north of Godfrey Avenue. The dedication of the building took place on the evening of November 16, 1939. It was also necessary to change their name to Second Protestant Reformed Church. Rev. M. Schipper was chosen to be their pastor during the decade of the forties, a decade of war and unrest nationally. Many of the young men of the congregation were sent off to war, and two of the young men paid the supreme sacrifice for their country.

Rev. Schipper accepted the call to the South Holland, IL congregation in 1945, and Second Church chose Rev. S. Cammenga to become their fourth pastor. The years of Rev. Cammenga's pastorate were relatively calm and peaceful, although the "union question" still presented some difficulties. But for all that, the congregation grew together in a strong bond of fellowship and love. Although we know that blessings are not measured by numbers, it is interesting to note that during the pastorate of Rev. Cammenga the congregation welcomed into their fellowship twenty-six new families, witnessed twenty-five confessions of faith, and had twenty-five baptisms. Of course, there were also those who transferred their membership to other of our churches, and there were some families who left the pure preaching of the Word as proclaimed from our pulpits. But our faithful God continued to bless Second Church.

After Rev. Cammenga accepted the call to our (then) church in Rock Valley, Iowa, Rev. J. Blankespoor became their pastor. This was the decade of the fifties, the decade of the schism in our churches, and Second Church also experienced the rending of the church and families so that on October 9, 1953 two deacons led the congregation to continue in the truth of God's Word and the confessions as maintained by the Protestant Reformed Churches. The congregation was reduced from about eighty-five families to less than forty, and as history was to show, they lost the church building and their name and had to "begin over."

Rev. M. Schipper was called to lead them during these difficult times, the second time they had this servant of the Lord minister to their needs. Their name was changed once again, this time to Southwest Protestant Reformed Church. Prior to the purchase of their own church building, they

met for a few years in the building of the Wyoming Park Seventh Day Adventist Church, and their weekly meetings were in an old, drafty, rented store building. In 1958 they purchased a church building on the corner of Porter Street and Meyers Avenue in the Beverly Park neighborhood, and in 1964 they purchased a parsonage on Central Avenue for Rev. G. Lubbers, who followed Rev. Schipper as pastor in 1964.

Rev. H. Veldman became their next pastor, and it was during his stay with them that it became necessary to build larger facilities. The property on Ivanrest Avenue was purchased in 1974. The first phase of their "three-phase building project," the building of the fellowship room to be used as a temporary meeting place, was dedicated for their use in July 1978. The second phase of their building project, that of the building of a parsonage, was finished in time for their next pastor, Rev. M. DeVries, and his young family to occupy in 1981. The final phase of the building project, that of the new sanctuary, was finished and dedicated in September 1988. With thanks to our faithful Father, the congregation was notified in 1998 that the entire building project was paid in full.


Rev. M. Kamps followed Rev. DeVries as pastor in 1986, and their present pastor, Rev. R. Cammenga, was installed on September 23, 1993. The congregation has experienced steady growth during the past several years, so that, at the end of the year 2000, they numbered about one hundred families. And they continue to make financial provisions for the completion of the balcony in the sanctuary.

Since 1998 Southwest has been privileged to be the calling church for the Eastern Home Missionary, Rev. J. Mahtani, who is presently laboring in Pittsburgh, PA. Southwest has an active Evangelism Committee, which sponsors the very successful "Summer Lecture Series," and is responsible for the



dissemination of the distinctive doctrines of the Protestant Reformed Churches through the publication and distribution of pamphlets and tracts.

Through all these seventy-five years God has kept Southwest faithful to His Word, not because of their worthiness but because He changes not! Let God then receive

all the praise and glory. And let us pray that He will continue to bless them and their children for many more years to come for His name's sake. 

## The Reformed Witness Hour

Mr. Scott E. Kunst

**L**ast summer I joined the Reformed Witness Hour Committee and became one of fourteen volunteers from five different PR churches to serve on the committee. This number includes our present radio minister, Rev. Haak.

I suggested that it would be a good idea if someone from our committee would write an article for the *Standard Bearer* on our work, and also list our stations and times. I was asked to write the article.

When I first joined this committee, I was astonished at how much work is done behind the scenes and how smoothly the whole committee seems to work.


The broadcasts are recorded on compact disks by Rev. Haak, who preaches the actual radio message. The rest of the broadcast is then recorded by Dr. Dwight Monsma, our radio announcer. The disks are then mailed week after week to each station. Also, booklets and tapes are made and sent out to regular subscribers and all who request them. This has been going on for almost sixty years now, which attests to the dedication and perseverance of the volunteers of the past.

Presently we are broadcasting on thirteen different stations in eleven different states and soon

will add a station in Canada. We are also trying to get on Family Radio, which broadcasts in thirty-eight states and on fifty-five different stations. We would like also to get onto Family Radio's short-wave stations. Our goals for the future include trying to add five more stations.

We receive five to ten responses every month. The majority of them are very encouraging.

If you listen, please drop us a letter or postcard. We also covet your prayers and support. Currently, our yearly budget runs about \$50,000 to \$60,000.00. We are thankful for the generous support of so many of our listeners and churches.

May the sovereign triune Lord continue to bless this outreach, and may the elect be gathered from the four corners of the earth! 

### Station Listings

Station	Location	Frequency	Time/day
KCCF	Ferndale, WA	1550AM	8:30 A.M./Sunday
KLOH	Pipestone, MN	1050AM	8:00 A.M./Sunday
KDCR	Sioux Center, IA	88.5FM	6:05 P.M./Sunday
KCWN	Pella, IA	99.9FM	3:30 P.M./Sunday
WMRH	Waupun, WI	1170AM	8:30 A.M./Sunday
WYLL	Chicago, IL	1160AM	8:30 A.M./Sunday
WFUR	Grand Rapids, MI	102.9FM	8:00 A.M./Sunday
WFUR	Grand Rapids, MI	1570AM	4:00 P.M./Sunday
WORD	Pittsburgh, PA	101.5FM	10:00 A.M./Sunday
WFNC	Fayetteville, NC	640AM	9:30 A.M./Sunday
WELP	Spartanburg, SC	1360AM	4:00 P.M./Sunday
WFAM	Augusta, GA	1050AM	4:00 P.M./Sunday
WBXR	Huntsville, AL	1140AM	9:00 A.M./Sunday
CJCA	Edmonton, AB	930AM	coming soon

Mr. Kunst is a member of Southeast Protestant Reformed Church.



### Congregation Activities

**S**eventy-five years ago this month, the Hudsonville, MI PRC had its beginnings in our denomination. In late May, over the Memorial Day weekend, they celebrated that anniversary. Over a period of two days Hudsonville's congregation, along with friends and family members from her two daughter congregations, the Byron Center and Georgetown PRCs, gathered together at the Hudsonville Fair Grounds for a wide range of activities, including a pig roast one evening and a pancake breakfast the following morning, softball and volleyball games between the three congregations, and tours of the original Hudsonville church. Rev. G. VanBaren, a former pastor of Hudsonville, spoke Saturday morning on Judges 4 and the twelve stones the children of Israel took from the Jordan River for a permanent memorial of what God had done for them. Rev. VanBaren provided a visual picture of this history and its significance for Hudsonville by having twelve young men of the congregation bring twelve stones up to the front and place them on the table he was standing on. Even though the weekend was wet and some would even say cold, many of Hudsonville's families also spent the two nights camping at the fairgrounds. On Sunday Rev. B. Gritters, Hudsonville's current pastor, brought the celebration to a fitting close when he preached from I Samuel 7:12, "Ebenezer: Confessing

Jehovah's Help." We can also add here that plans now call for the Trinity PRC in Hudsonville, MI to be organized, the Lord willing, on July 19.

Rev. C. Terpstra, along with his family, was able to move into the newly completed parsonage of the First PRC in Holland, MI in late May. We can only imagine how convenient this must be for the Terpstra family. Now they have only a few steps to go when attending church, where before they had to drive from the old church location.

The congregation of the Southwest PRC in Grandville, MI sponsored an open house for Pastor Lau Chin Kwee, his wife Fong Ngee, his daughter Tabitha, and his son Paul, on May 26 at their church. It was an opportunity for Southwest to meet Rev. Lau's entire family, which came to the United States after he completed his last semester of advanced training at our Theological School. It appears, from various bulletins we have seen since then, that the Lau family played the part of tourist as they traveled back across the U.S. and Canada, stopping to preach in various of our churches until they arrived at the Hope PRC in Redlands, CA before returning to Singapore, where Rev. Lau is pastor of the First Evangelical Reformed Church.

### Evangelism Activities

**T**he Evangelism Society of the Byron Center, MI PRC has been busy this spring. First they sponsored a lecture given by their pastor, Rev. Doug Kuiper, on "The Sin of Gambling" at South Christian High School on May 31. Then the following Lord's Day they sponsored a special area-wide worship service on the theme "Miracles: Signs of an Apostle." Rev. Kuiper planned to explain

what miracles are, why they were done in the past, and why they are not done today.

The Evangelism Committee of the Kalamazoo, MI PRC hosted a speech by Prof. H. Hanko on May 17 entitled, "The Framework Hypothesis and Genesis 1." With the goal of aiding in the understanding of the relationship between God's covenant and a zeal for missions, the Evangelism Society of the Bethel PRC in Roselle, IL presented an Evangelism Meeting on May 18 featuring Rev. T. Miersma, Western Home Missionary of our churches, speaking on the truth of "The Covenant and Missions."

### Mission Activities

**I**n late May, Rev. A. Spriensma, pastor of the Grandville, MI PRC, along with his wife Alva and their two daughters, Alicia and Jessica, left for a seven-week stay in our mission field in Ghana, W. Africa. They will be there while Rev. R. Moore and his wife Jannet are in the US for a furlough.

### Young Adult Activities

**S**pecial thanks goes out to the Young Adults of the Covenant PRC in Wyckoff, NJ, who served as hosts for their annual Spring Retreat. Most of the 60 or so young adults who attended arrived on Saturday, May 19 and left on Friday, May 25. This year's theme was "The Call to Discipleship," with Rev. R. VanOverloop speaking on "The Loss of Discipleship," and Rev. B. Gritters speaking on "The Rewards of Discipleship." Most activities revolved around the Harvey Cedars Bible Conference Center, but there was time for a day trip to New York City.

### Minister Activities

**R**ev. J. Slopsema declined the call from the Randolph, WI

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



PRC. From their new trio of the Revs. A. Brummel, M. DeVries, and R. VanOverloop, Randolph extended a call to Rev. Brummel. Rev. D. Kleyn declined the call from the Lynden, WA PRC. Sub-

sequently they called Rev. K. Koole, chosen from a trio that included also Revs. B. Gritters and J. Slopsema. Rev. M. Vander Wal declined the call to serve as minister-on-loan to Singapore.

## Food For Thought

"Learning may be usefully employed; but if learning ever forgets that it must sit at the feet of Jesus, it will be a curse instead of a blessing."

— Robert Haldane 

## Announcements

### RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The consistory and congregation of the Loveland PRC express their Christian sympathy to Jon and Mary Schwarz, Don and Lynnette Schwarz, Talitha Dotson, and Max and Virginia Moore and their families in the death of their mother, mother-in-law, and grandmother,

**MRS. CLARA SCHWARZ.**

Psalm 16:9-11: "Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope. For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore."

### RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The consistory and congregation of the Loveland PRC express their Christian sympathy to the families of Bill and Jane Bos and Bob and Patti Bos in the death of their father, father-in-law, and grandfather,

**MR. RICH BOS.**

May they be comforted by God's Word, "Nevertheless I am continually with thee; thou hast holden me by my right hand. Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory" (Psalm 73:23, 24).

### RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The consistory and congregation of the Loveland PRC express their Christian sympathy to fellow members John and Lara Moore and to the Lubbers family in the loss of

**REV. GEORGE LUBBERS.**

We are especially thankful to God for Rev. Lubbers' dedicated labors in helping to establish the congregation in Loveland. Matthew 25:23: "Well done, good and faithful servant; ... enter thou into the joy of thy lord."

Rev. Garrett Eriks, Pres.  
Robert Brands, Clerk

### Free Christian School, Edgerton, MN

To former principals, teachers, and students,

It is with much gratitude to our heavenly Father that we make plans to celebrate the 50th anniversary of our Free Christian School. We invite you to join us for an evening of praise, singing, and reminiscing on Friday, July 27 at 7:30 P.M., D.V.

You may take part in the program by simply being present for the fellowship, or if you would like, you may give a few comments. If you cannot come, you are welcome to forward any remarks via mail or e-mail which could be read at the program or inserted into a booklet.

### NOTICE!

Classis West of the Protestant Reformed Churches will be hosted by the Hull Protestant Reformed Church in Hull, Iowa on Wednesday, September 5, 2001 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 6, 2001, thirty days before Classis convenes. An officebearers' conference is tentatively planned for Tuesday, September 4. Delegates or visitors in need of lodging or transportation from the airport should notify the clerk of Hull, Mr. Don VerMeer, 4149 290<sup>th</sup> St., Boyden, IA 51234. Phone: (712) 725-2505. Email: donver@heartlandtel.com

Rev. Daniel Kleyn, Stated Clerk

With gratitude to God, the council of Hope PRC (Walker) is commemorating the 40<sup>th</sup> year of ministry of our associate pastor,

**REV. JASON KORTERING.**

There will be a program at the church on July 13, 2001 at 7:30 P.M. celebrating this occasion. All are welcome to attend.

### WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

With gratitude to God, we announce that on July 13, 2001, our parents and grandparents,

**DAVE and SUSAN ZYLSTRA,**

will celebrate their 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary, D.V. We are thankful to God for our God-fearing parents and for the covenantal instruction they have given us.

"Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths" (Proverbs 3:5, 6).

- \* John and Hilda Zylstra
- \* Peter Zylstra (gone to glory)
- \* Marty and Adeline Zylstra
- \* Herman and Geri Klaassens
- \* Clayton and Jackie DeGroot
- \* Arlene Schmidt
- \* Ed and Pat Huizing
- \* Rick and Marsha Span
- \* Tim and Jill Zylstra
- \* Joe and Valerie VanGelderren
- \* Peter and Rhoda Hendricks

66 grandchildren, 3 great-grandchildren

Lacombe, Alberta

### RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Adult Bible Class of Faith PRC express their Christian sympathy to members Mr. and Mrs. Fred Hanko in the death of their brother-in-law,

**MR. RICHARD BOS.**

"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God" (1 John 3:1a)

Joe Brummel, Pres.  
K. Dykstra, Sec.

### RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The council and congregation of Grandville PRC express their Christian sympathy to Mr. and Mrs. Victor Oosterbaan in the death of their brother-in-law,

**MR. RAY OVERWEG.**

May they find comfort in the words of Philippians 1:21, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

Rev. Audred Spriensma, President  
Jack Brands, Assistant Clerk



## RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Men's Society of Hope PRC, Grand Rapids, express their Christian sympathy to John Buitter and Martin DeVries in the death of their brother and brother-in-law,

**MR. BILL BUITER.**

May they find strength and comfort in God's Word, "Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (I Corinthians 15:51, 52).

Calvin Kalsbeek, Vice-Pres.  
Wayne Bleyenbergh, Sec'y.

## RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The council and congregation of Cornerstone PRC extend their Christian sympathy to Keith and Mary Vooy's family on the death of their father and grandfather,

**MR. JOHN FLIKKEMA.**

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me" (Psalm 23:4)

Rev. Nathan Brummel, Pres.  
Don Bruinsma, Clerk

## NOTICE!!

Classis East will meet in regular session on Wednesday, September 12, 2001 at the Kalamazoo Protestant Reformed Church, Kalamazoo, Michigan. Material for this session must be in the hands of the stated clerk no later than August 12, 2001.

Jon J. Huisken, Stated Clerk

## NOTICE!!!

New bulletin clerk for Randolph:

Sarah Hoksbergen

213 S. High St.

RANDOLPH, WI 53956

(920) 326-3824

edsarah@internetwis.com

## NOTICE!!

Please make a change in the address and phone number for Rev. Charles Terpstra:

Rev. & Mrs. Charles J. Terpstra

3645 104th Ave.

Holland, MI 49424

Phone (Home): 748-8038

Study: 748-7921

Fax: 748-7945

## RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The council and congregation of Grandville PRC express their Christian sympathy to Mr. Ed Bos in the death of his father,

**MR. RICH BOS.**

"For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:38, 39).

Rev. Audred Spriensma, President  
Jack Brands, Assistant Clerk

## Hull Protestant Reformed Christian School 25th Anniversary Celebration

Plan to come to the Hull PR Christian School on Friday evening, August 31, for our 25th Anniversary Celebration. Program at church, followed by tours and refreshments at school.

Mark your calendars and plan to come. Join us in thanksgiving and praise for God's covenant faithfulness for our school's 25 years of existence.

## RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The council of Faith PRC express their Christian sympathy with our fellow saints and fellow members of our congregation, Elaine Bos and Mr. and Mrs. Fred Hanko, on the death of their husband and brother-in-law,

**RICHARD A. BOS.**

"In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:2, 3).

Rev. Kenneth Koole, Pres.

## RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The council of Hope PRC (Walker) express their Christian sympathy to Elder Neil Meyer in the loss of his father,

**JOE MEYER.**

May he and his family find comfort in God's Word, "Cast thy burdens upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved" (Psalm 55:22).

Rev. J. Laning, Pres.  
Harry Langerak, Clerk

## WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On June 11, 2001, our parents,

**BOB and KATHY KNOTT,**

celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary. We have been blessed with parents who love each other, who love their children, and above all, who love the Lord. We are thankful for the godly heritage that they have passed on to us. We praise God for His abiding faithfulness to them over the past 25 years. It is our prayer that the Lord will continue to bless them in the years to come. "So we thy people and sheep of thy pasture will give thee thanks for ever: we will show forth thy praise to all generations" (Psalm 79:13).

✿ Jennifer

✿ Katie

✿ Aaron

Grand Rapids, Michigan

## RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

We express our sincere sympathy to Mrs. Elaine Bos and her children in the death of her husband and their father,

**MR. RICHARD BOS,**

who was taken to glory from Yangon, Myanmar on 02 May 2001.

We remember you for your love for our Lord and willingness to be helpful in the cause of the gospel.

May God comfort you with the hope of glory, "Begotten unto an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you" (I Peter 1:3, 4).

Joint Mission Committee  
Evangelical Ref'd. Churches of Singapore  
Boon Suan Kiat, Secretary

## RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Ladies' Society of the Hudsonville PRC express their sincere Christian sympathy to member Grace Bruining in the sudden loss of her brother,

**RALPH BALKEMA.**

May the family be comforted by God's Word, "My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever" (Psalm 73:26).

Barb Dykstra, Vice-president  
Freda Zwak, Secretary