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Meditation

Rev. Charles Terpstra

Comforted by the Treasures in Christ

Introduction

Esteemed delegates to the 2002 Synod of the PRC and beloved saints of the church of Jesus Christ, our text this evening (Col. 2:1-4) directs us to a truth of utmost importance for the faith and life of the church in our day, and for the work of the synod in this week. That truth is that in Christ all the treasures of wisdom

and knowledge are hid. Hid not so that we cannot find them and profit from them. But hid in Him so that our hearts might be comforted, i.e., encouraged and fortified, by the knowledge and assurance of what is in Him.

This was a message of great need for the saints in Colosse. Paul wrote to this church in Asia Minor and to others, including Laodicea, because, though he did not know most of these saints personally (they could be said to be an indirect fruit of his missionary labors), he cared deeply about them. He wanted them to be strengthened in their young faith and to walk in the Lord. Especially did he write to them be-

cause they were being threatened by a dangerous error, one that attacked the truth concerning Christ and the fullness of salvation in Him. This "Colossian" error, as it is known, taught that Christ was not enough for believers. They needed more than could be found in Christ — more revelation, more knowledge, more grace and blessings, and more experiences.

Hence the inspired apostle set out to demonstrate positively that Christ is all we need. He did that plainly and powerfully in chapter 1, especially verses 14-20. At the end of that section he spoke personally of the fact that he was a minister of that gospel concerning Christ's full-

Rev. Terpstra is pastor of First Protestant Reformed Church in Holland, Michigan. This Meditation is the text of the pre-synodical sermon preached by Rev. Terpstra on June 10, 2002.

ness, especially from the viewpoint that it is God's mystery.

Now in this section he continues in that same vein. We can still see the personal flavor (2:1). He states that he writes out of deep personal concern and struggle. This follows from the last verse of chapter 1. The word "conflict" in verse 1 is the same root as "striving" there. He has this great conflict because he does not want them to be beguiled (v. 4).

Rather, he wants them to be comforted. And what will do that? To have the full assurance of knowing God's mystery in Christ. To know the treasures that are in Him. Once more Paul sets forth the positive before he will go into a critical look at the error that was troubling them. He will drive the main message home to them, that their hearts might have peace through the fullness of Christ. This is an important and precious word for us too. This pastor's concern is also this pastor's concern for you, men of synod, and for you, saints of God.

I. The Great Riches

If these saints are to be comforted, they must know the great riches that are stored up in Christ, the Head of the church and the Head of each member of the church. That's the point of verses 2, 3. Here Paul gives what will provide them with rock-solid consolation and strength. It is again the central message of this epistle — Christ is pre-eminent and all-sufficient! Know Him and you will have all you need for your faith and for your life! With that in mind he writes that they must have hearts that are "unto (or, more literally, *into*) all riches of the full assurance of understanding..." The heart here includes all that we are from a spiritual point of view. Our minds and wills and all our affections, our entire spiritual being must be toward the riches in Christ. We must know them, understand them, discern them, and be fully persuaded of them. When we do, then we will have comfort.

But what are these riches? In verse 2 they are referred to as "the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ." That concept also occurs in the preceding context, chapter 1:26. It is an important term in the broader context of the reason for this letter. The Gnostic teachers liked this word too. Only they meant by it secretive truths hidden to most believers and found by only a few select super-saints. These were the ones who through the knowledge and wisdom the false teachers claimed to give attained to a higher and deeper knowledge than the average Christian.

But God's mystery is quite different, the apostle has said. It is truth that is out in the open and made known to every believer. It is knowledge that is revealed to every New Testament Christian. It is true that for a time this mystery was hidden in the Old Testament era. That was God's sovereign plan to reconcile Jew and Gentile through the cross of Christ. And now in the New Testament that plan is fully made known, because God has revealed Christ His Son from heaven and accomplished this salvation plan through His death and resurrection.

And the riches are all that is included in that mystery of God. We may call this mystery the riches of God's grace revealed in Jesus Christ. It includes, first of all, our reconciliation to God — that in the cross God dealt with the breach between us, viz., our sins, and blotted out those sins by dealing with them in His Son. By that He forgave us, and thus brought us near to Himself. He took away the enmity and established peace and friendship between us.

Then, too, that mystery includes our reconciliation one to another. God took away the enmity between elect sinners, and brought them together in peace and unity in Himself — Jews and Gentiles, high and low, rich and poor, slave and free man, male and female. He formed them into a glorious body,

the communion of saints, where they live together in peace. That is manifested in each of our congregations.

And finally, that mystery includes God's work of reconciling all things to Himself through Christ. All creation fallen in the priest-king Adam and under the curse is now redeemed through the cross of the greater (-est!) Priest-King, our Lord Jesus Christ! And so all things are already, in principle, at peace with God and one day will share in the perfect unity of all God's finished works.

What incredible riches! What wealth is ours through this mystery of God and the Father! Is it not plain that with the knowledge of this mystery we have everything we need for time and for eternity?! How could we ever lack anything if God has revealed this to us?! What could possibly be added to this revelation of God and of Christ?! And to our knowledge if we know this?! This is the treasure God has given the church, given us, given you saints. This is the treasure synod is called to deal with in all her labors. Oh, be careful to know and maintain and guard this treasure! It is our all!

And now in verse 3 these riches are said to be hidden in Christ. They are called the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; a storehouse of goods; a treasure chest of wealth — laid open to reveal the wisdom of God and His amazing knowledge of His plan of redemption and reconciliation, His amazing way to save mankind and rescue creation from the curse. There is no more perfect plan or goal or means than what the wisdom of God has determined and accomplished! Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!

The fact that these treasures are hidden in Christ does not mean they are stored away for no one to see or know. Rather it means that they are all contained in Christ; there is no other way to find the treasures of God's wisdom and

knowledge than in Christ! And, therefore, if one would know the way of true knowledge and wisdom, the real path of life and peace, the road of blessing and joy and hope, he must seek Christ! He must take the map of God's Word and find the hidden treasure that is in Christ! Not the so-called wisdom of these false teachers or any of the false teachers of our day! We do not need the "wisdom" of Rome, or of Arminianism or of Pentecostalism or of any of the cults. Not the path of knowledge they promote! But God's wisdom and knowledge is what we must have! Because His Son is all and all-sufficient for us! Do we believe that? Do we live according to that?

II. The Wonderful Comfort

These riches are for the comfort of the saints in Colosse and Laodicea, and for us. This is what the apostle is in great conflict over. He agonizes in his soul and strives in all his preaching and teaching for the purpose of their being comforted by these riches, by this treasure hidden in Christ. This is the passionate purpose of his ministry.

Comfort here in verse 2 is not so much relief for suffering or sorrow, but rather strength and encouragement and fortification in the truth of the gospel over against the false teachers and their false gospel. The word used for "comfort" can refer to several kinds of comfort. Literally, it means "to come to the side of." One can come to another's side to console, to admonish, to strengthen, to lift up, and so on. It is in the sense of strengthening and encouraging that it is used here.

For this reason the focus is on their spiritual understanding of the treasures in Christ and on their full assurance of the truth. Paul wants them to know and understand the riches of God's grace to them; to discern their truthfulness; to see the wisdom and knowledge of God in them; to see their unity, how God's truth all hangs together logically.

And that in contrast to the lies of the false teachers, whose teachings reveal no wisdom, no unity, no coherency, no truthfulness.

Further, he wants them to acknowledge, i.e., fully know, what the true mystery is. Press on, he says, to grasp what God has done in Christ for you, what He has revealed to you in the gospel! Come to know more and more of the truth! Look into the treasure chest and explore the riches of salvation hidden in Christ! That means, Study the Word! Study grace! Delve into Christ! Discover again and again the fullness you have in Him! See how complete you are in Him!

That is so necessary at all times in the face of error — this particular error that the Colossians were facing, as well as all those that we and the all the saints face in our time. Spiritual ignorance of God's mystery will always lead one to seek something besides Christ, to look for a greater fullness elsewhere than in Him. So we too must never be satisfied with our knowledge and understanding of God's mystery. We must go on to know it, study it more so as to grow deeper in our acknowledgment of its riches.

And along with that, they and we must also have the full assurance of this mystery of God. False teaching is always designed to make the saints doubt. Satan wants us to question the truth, doubt God, and waver with regard to the treasures in Christ. Ultimately he wants us to be unbelieving with regard to God and the gospel. That is why he uses such deceptive lies of false teachers. But the Holy Spirit will not have it that way! As we ponder this mystery of God in Christ and ponder the treasures of wisdom and knowledge that are hidden in Christ, we must have full persuasion that this gospel is the truth. It must be our firm conviction that it is all we need for salvation and for life, that nothing can or may be added to it to give us more. That's the nature of true, sav-

ing faith, remember. Not doubt about God's mystery; not a lack of confidence that it is true, but the full assurance of what God has revealed to us in the gospel.

Do we have that, fellow saints? Do you delegates have this as you face your work at synod? Do you senior seminarians to be examined have that? If there is weakness in this, then go on to understand and acknowledge God's mystery! For the more we know it, the more assured we will be of its truthfulness and power to comfort us.

But we must notice another element here yet. Verse 2 speaks of "being knit together in love." The saints' hearts will be comforted only when they also stand together in love! That is, in love of God and Christ and the truth and the treasures in Christ! True unity is only in love of this mystery of God. That must always be understood. False teaching always divides. That explains why the New Testament word for heresy means "division, schism." But over against this, the saints must stand together in true unity. They do so when they are knit together in love of the true treasures in Christ. And, of course, that also means that they are knit together in love of one another. If you love the truth together, you love each other and walk in love toward each other — which is why the members of the PRC ought to be the most united, most loving Christians there are. But are we? Are we truly comforted by being "knit together in love"? Are we strong because we love one another too, as well as the truth of the gospel? That's the way it must be if we truly acknowledge God's mystery in Christ. Let that love characterize our work as synod. Let it dominate our life in the church. Let it be the witness of our walk in this world of darkness.


III. The Practical Reason

In verse 4 Paul gives us the practical reason for this comfort. "And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words." This

is the first time he has mentioned the false teachers directly. He is going to go into a detailed description of them and their error within a few verses. But here is a short description of them. They are out to beguile the saints, i.e., deceive and delude them by false reasoning, by distortion of the truth. And the method they use is "enticing words." They talk smoothly and sound persuasive. That's exactly the way heretics work in the church. They confuse people with fair speech and convincing ar-

guments. They use the language of Scripture and the creeds, but attach an entirely new meaning to it. This is why we must always be on our guard and discern all error through our knowledge of God's mystery revealed in Scripture. Be watchful, beloved! Know and be assured of the true gospel, the treasures in Christ!

Paul had such a heart for God's people that he had a great conflict for them. He had soul-wrestlings that they might have this comfort

of God's mystery. As a missionary-pastor, he had the care of God's church constantly in his soul. Oh, how he loved the saints. And God! And the truth of the gospel! Do we have the same fervency and devotion? Are we striving to make sure that the saints are comforted by knowing and being assured of God's mystery? Let this be the passion of our hearts, of our ministries, of our labors. For the glory of God and of Christ. For He is preeminent and all-sufficient! Amen. 

Editorial

Actions of the 2002 Synod of the PRC

It was gratifying that the auditorium of the Southwest Protestant Reformed Church in Grandville, Michigan was full for the pre-synodical worship service on Monday evening, June 10. Rev. Charles Terpstra, president of the previous synod, preached to the assembled delegates of synod, congregation of Southwest, and visitors on Colossians 2:1-4: "...in whom [Christ] are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." The text of this sermon is the meditation in this issue of the *Standard Bearer*.

The officers of the 2002 synod were Rev. James Slopsema (First PRC, Grand Rapids, Michigan), president; Rev. Ronald VanOverloop (Georgetown PRC, Hudsonville, Michigan), vice-president; Rev. Steven Key (Hull PRC, Hull, Iowa), first clerk; and Rev. Daniel Kleyn (Edgerton PRC, Edgerton, Minnesota), second clerk.

Synod met from Tuesday, June 11, through Tuesday, June 18.

Seminary

Almost two days were devoted to the oral examination of two senior seminarians at the Protestant

Reformed Seminary, Mr. Rodney Kleyn and Mr. David Overway. After the two men preached specimen sermons to the synod, they were examined before synod in dogmatics, church history, church polity, Old Testament history, New Testament history, and the practical matters of their own godliness and conviction of their calling to the gospel ministry in the Protestant Reformed Churches (PRC). In addition, the two graduating seminarians presented written exegesis of prescribed passages from both the Hebrew Old Testament and the Greek New Testament. Synod approved the examination of both and declared them candidates for the ministry of the Word and Sacraments in the PRC on or after July 13, 2002.

The Theological School Committee of the Protestant Reformed Seminary conducted public graduation exercises for Mr. Kleyn and Mr. Overway on Monday evening, June 17, at Southwest PRC. Again the auditorium was full. Prof. Russell Dykstra, professor of Church History and New Testament Studies, addressed the gradu-

ates, faculty of the seminary, members of the Theological School Committee, synodical delegates, and many visitors from II Corinthians 4, "The Work and Character of the Reformed Minister: All Glory to God!"

In other decisions concerning the seminary, synod admitted two men to the seminary, to begin their studies this fall, and decided that next year's synod will appoint a replacement for Prof. Robert Decker.

Contact Committee

Synod approved a visit of the Evangelical Reformed Churches in Singapore (ERCS) by a delegation from the Contact Committee and Hope PRC, Walker, Michigan in the winter of 2002/2003. Among other matters, this delegation from the PRC is to discuss with the ERCS the doctrine of marriage that was the concern of a letter sent to the ERCS by the 2001 synod of the PRC (see "Acts of Synod & Yearbook of the Protestant Reformed Churches in America, 2001," pp. 310-312).

The ERCS have two men studying for the ministry in the Protestant Reformed Seminary. Synod

was informed that one of them, Mr. Paul Goh, will be doing his internship this year in the Bethel PRC, Roselle, Illinois, under the supervision and tutelage of Rev. Carl Haak.

From the Contact Committee, synod received the discouraging report of the disbanding of the Covenant PRC of Northern Ireland, sister church of the PRC in North America, in April of this year. The grounds for the disbanding, in full, as reported by the Contact Committee, were the following: "a. The disunity that exists within our church cannot be resolved; b. a decline in membership that is likely to continue; c. there are insufficient numbers of men who are either qualified or willing to serve in office; d. the reputation of our church in this community is that we are divided; e. during the past year we have had very few people visiting our church or showing any interest in us; f. the work of our evangelism committee and the holding of special public meetings have stopped; g. all the mission work in which we were once involved has ceased and there are presently no grounds for believing that our objective of forming a denomination can be realized."

The remnant consisting of seven families and several individuals have organized as the Covenant Protestant Reformed Fellowship of Northern Ireland. This group asked synod that the PRC continue to work with them by means of Rev. Angus Stewart. Synod granted this request for the coming year. Rev. Stewart will preach regularly for the group in Ballymena, Northern Ireland, work with the group in witnessing to the Reformed faith in the area, and engage in missions more widely throughout the British Isles as he has opportunity. The work will be supervised by the Domestic Mission Committee of the PRC and by Hudsonville PRC. The Domestic Mission Committee and Hudsonville are to evaluate the situation in Northern Ireland and recom-

mend to the next synod whether to continue the work in Northern Ireland. Rev. Stewart was instructed to seek admission to the ministry in the PRC through the council of Hudsonville. Synod sent a letter of encouragement to the fellowship in Northern Ireland.

Synod approved a conference in Australia with the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Australia this summer. The delegation from the Contact Committee is Rev. Ronald Cammenga and Prof. Robert Decker.

Upon the recommendation of the Contact Committee, synod discontinued ecumenical discussions with the United Reformed Churches (URC). There were three grounds for this decision. The first two concerned different conceptions of church unity in the two denominations. The third specified fundamental doctrinal and ethical differences between the PRC and the URC. The URC approve unbiblical divorce and remarriage after divorce even in the instance of one of their ministers. The URC tolerate the "framework hypothesis" as the explanation of the account of creation in Genesis 1 and 2 by decision of their 2001 synod, which refused to condemn this hypothesis in its decision on creation and evolution. The URC tolerate, if they do not officially approve, the doctrine of a conditional covenant by virtue of their decision to work toward full ecclesiastical union with the Canadian Reformed Churches. The URC tolerate theonomic postmillennialism by knowingly admitting into their ministry one who holds these teachings. The full text of the decision discontinuing discussions with the URC should be read in the published "Acts" of the 2002 synod of the PRC.

In an intriguing development of relations between mother and daughter, the Christian Reformed Church (CRC) invited the PRC to a "consultation" with a "view to establishing a relationship of fellowship." This invitation resulted from Prof. John Bolt's overture to

Classis Grand Rapids East of the CRC, that the CRC apologize to the PRC for her unjust treatment of the founders of the PRC in the common grace controversy of 1924. The Contact Committee of the PRC responded that the PRC are willing to discuss the differences between the PRC and the CRC, but that discussions must begin with the doctrinal and church polity issues of the common grace controversy in the 1920s. To this stipulation, the Interchurch Relations Committee of the CRC has agreed. The 2002 synod of the PRC instructed their Contact Committee to meet with the Interchurch Relations Committee of the CRC, to discuss the doctrinal and church polity issues of the common grace controversy of the 1920s that resulted in the formation of the PRC. This will be the first official meeting of the CRC and the PRC, to discuss their relations as Reformed churches, since the famed Pantlind Conference of 1939 (see "A Notable Meeting on Behalf of the Reunion of the CRC and the PRC," in the *Standard Bearer*, Oct. 1, 2000).

Domestic Mission Committee

Synod heard reports of home mission works in Spokane, Washington and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Considering a proposal from the Domestic Mission Committee that a minister be called as missionary to Fayetteville, North Carolina, synod instructed the Domestic Mission Committee "to continue the work in Fayetteville at this time without the presence of a full-time missionary." The grounds were that "a four-family core group does not require calling another missionary at the present time" and that "calling another missionary will increase the already significant number of vacancies in our churches."

Foreign Mission Committee

Synod adopted the proposal of its Foreign Mission Committee, that the Hull, Iowa PRC call a second missionary for the Ghana, West Africa mission field. The grounds

were that recent increases in attendance have resulted in additional pastoral work; that a second missionary is needed to develop the work; that another missionary is needed to train officebearers; and that in view of the age of the present missionary, Rev. Wayne Bekkering, calling a second missionary would be the part of wisdom for a good transition in the future. The decision to call a second missionary was virtually demanded by the decision of the synod of 2001 that two missionaries are necessary on the Ghana field and by the request of missionary Rev. Richard Moore for emeritation.

Synod also approved a set of guidelines for the missionaries in Ghana to follow in their instruction of the people regarding marriage. These guidelines will be published in the forthcoming "Acts" of the 2002 synod.

Emeritation

Synod approved the emeritation of three veteran ministers of the PRC, Rev. Jason Kortering, Rev. Dale Kuiper, and Rev. Richard Moore. Rev. Kortering and Rev.

Moore will become emeritus this summer. Rev. Kuiper's emeritation is scheduled for the first of next year. From July 1, 2002 to the end of the year, Rev. Kuiper will oversee the internship in Southeast PRC of the other third-year seminarian, Mr. William Langerak. Among them, the three retiring ministers have devoted some 111 years to the service of the Lord Christ in the gospel ministry in the PRC.

Various Matters

Two appeals against a consistory and against the broader assemblies in a matter of discipline were treated in closed session. Synod rejected the appeals.

Synod received with gratitude a bequest of more than \$230,000 from the late Miss Jean Dykstra, longtime member of First PRC, Grand Rapids, Michigan. The money went to the Emeritus Fund of the denomination as she had designated. This gift of money to a particular work of the churches on behalf of the gospel in one's will is a worthy example.

Synod accepted the resignation of longtime (14 years) synodical

treasurer Mr. Joel Zandstra. Mr. Zandstra resigned because of the demands of his regular employment. Synod thanked Mr. Zandstra for his faithful work as treasurer. It appointed Mr. David M. Ondersma to fill Mr. Zandstra's unexpired term.

The synodical budget for 2003 remains the same as for 2002: \$845 per family per year.

Synod accepted the invitation of the Hudsonville PRC, Hudsonville, Michigan, to host the 2003 synod of the PRC.

All families and individual members of the PRC will receive the published "Acts" of the recent synod by October of this year. Whereas this report of synod in the *Standard Bearer* is only a summary of some of the decisions, the "Acts" will contain all of the decisions of synod in their entirety, except for decisions taken in closed session, as well as the various supplements.

Now let the churches and their members beseech God's blessing upon the actions of synod, that these actions may be fruitful in the life and work of the PRC.

— DJE 

Letters

■ Criticism for a Lack of Criticism

I have been reading RFPA books for some years now. I have also been receiving the *Standard Bearer* for some time as well. I would like to inquire as to why there are no books by Protestant Reformed ministers that deal specifically with the heresy of Cornelius VanTil. I have not seen any critical essays against this Dutchman's theology in the *Standard Bearer* either. I did on the contrary see a couple of paragraphs in a *Standard Bearer* complimenting VanTil and discussing what fine friends Hoeksema and VanTil were. One might be led to think that perhaps VanTil's theology was orthodox or even Dutch.

Of course, you know that VanTil deviated from the orthodox view of the Trinity (teaching that God was one person in three persons). He opposed total depravity with his common grace views. He vomited out the free offer of the gospel every chance he got. He attacked irresistible grace. His doctrine of the incomprehensibility of God was the greatest heresy of the twentieth century and not only made the Bible pointless to read, but made knowledge completely impossible.

There is a book put out by the Trinity Foundation that is an aggregation of articles by Hoeksema (from the *Standard Bearer*) which critically examines and attacks VanTil's paradoxical nonsense. I

would love to see some more articles reaffirming the commitment of the PRC against this Presbyterian type of false Calvinism. When people in my part of the country hear the name VanTil, they think Dutch Calvinism. You are theologically obligated to go after VanTil's theology in print (calling it by name), seeing that you claim to be the purest form of Dutch Calvinism there is today. VanTil has many supporters who would rush to his defense if you were to print that he was wrong — would that be a problem? VanTil's system is gaining greater support in non-Reformed seminaries, and thus the need grows even greater to separate clearly from this mess.

May God give you courage to take up the pen against this heretic. Keep up the writing and publishing of the Reformed faith.

Monty L. Collier
Kingsport, TN

Response:

What you saw in the *Standard Bearer* recently about VanTil and Hoeksema was a letter from a Christian Reformed minister. Letters obviously do not represent the position of the *SB* or its writers.

You are not correct about a complete lack of criticism of VanTil. In the May 15, 1996 issue of the *SB*, I published a long critical review of John Frame's study of VanTil, *Cornelius Van Til: An Analysis of His Thought* (P&R, 1995). In the review I criticized VanTil's paradoxical theology in general and his doctrine of the Trinity in particular.

To say that God is one person as well as three persons and that God is one substance as well as three substances [as Frame proposes] creates mass Trinitarian confusion. Now we have a purportedly Presbyterian doctrine of the Trinity that teaches that God is one person and three persons, as well as one being and three beings. Frame thinks that such a formulation is "valuable in curbing human intellectual pride." In fact, such contradiction amounts to nonsense. It makes mockery of the sanctified mind of the Christian, reduces theological affirmation to meaninglessness, and destroys faith's knowledge of God in His Trinitarian life. The source of this bad theology is "the idea of the apparently contradictory" (*SB*, May 15, 1996, pp. 379-381).

The reason why little space is addressed to VanTil is that he has no influence in the Protestant Reformed Churches (PRC). If his paradoxical theology with its various specific errors is a threat to other churches, let them assail it. I have become weary with people who express great interest in sound doctrine and who love to see other men carry on a lively doctrinal

battle, but who themselves cheerfully remain in churches full of the very errors that they say they oppose. In the PRC, we take the truth seriously. This means that we see to it that we are in churches where the truth is confessed and where such errors as those of VanTil have no place.

— Ed.

■ Ghanaian Missions

The editorial of the June issue entitled "Synod of the PRC, 2002" called attention to some of the difficulties our churches are experiencing in the labors on the mission field in Ghana. In the article a comparison was made between the presentation of the Foreign Mission Committee to synod in 1996 and what the FMC and Hull's council present today. The comparison, however, fails to take into account the historical development of the work on the field, a development that is important to understand if one is to gain a proper understanding of the apparent discrepancies that were pointed out in the editorial.

Although I may not be the most capable person in setting forth these matters, not having been involved in the work of the FMC and Hull's council before July 2000, nevertheless I will attempt to show the development of the work as I have watched it continue to unfold in the past couple years.

The delegations that first visited Ghana met with those who had previously been in contact with our churches, and they established other contacts in Ghana, particularly those in established churches in and around the major city of Accra, where we presently labor. Those with whom the FMC had contact, therefore, were those who were established Christians, and showed a high regard for godly marriage, family, and other basic fruits of the Christian life. Family structure was also observed by those early delegations as being

sound, and from many points of view stronger than the family structure seen even in our country. It was also true that the delegations that first went to Ghana, although observing poverty, had contacts primarily among those who were educated, had good jobs, and were financially capable.

It must also be remembered, however, that the Protestant Reformed Churches sent a missionary to Ghana to break new ground in mission work. There was no "core group" to which we sent a missionary. Rather, for the first time in our churches' history, we sent a missionary "to plant," rather than to water and harvest what others had planted. When Rev. Richard Moore accepted the call to Ghana and settled in Accra, beginning the labors, our great God began to gather by His Word and Spirit through the faithful preaching of our missionary. He began to gather in ways amazing to us. I don't think anyone in our churches could have anticipated the number of people whom God would gather in the roughly three years that we have labored in Ghana.

At the same time, in the development of our work in Ghana, we are reminded of the truth that "not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence" (I Cor. 1:26-29).

In God's providence, those who have come under the power of the gospel have not come from the wealthy and highly educated citizenship of Accra, with few exceptions, but rather from the weak and poor and those who lack formal education. This was not by the de-

sign of our missionary, nor the FMC or Hull council. These are not "our ways." They are emphatically not "our ways." Although the poor have been gathered, our missionaries have not gathered the poor by giving handouts. Although benevolent needs are cared for in minimal ways, the very strict benevolent guidelines of the FMC and Hull's council, as approved by synod, are designed to prevent a "welfare church." Benevolence is provided only for dire medical needs, daily bread where that is a demonstrated necessity, and to bury the dead. It may not be the purpose of the PRC to buy a church membership in Ghana.

We do face dire poverty among some of those with whom we labor. We also find among many a lack of work, and in some cases perhaps a sinful neglect of work — something which also must be addressed by the gospel.

In addition, also belonging to the historical development of the field, we have learned of many weaknesses and sins involving marriage and family relationships. It has taken a significant amount of time, not only for the FMC and Hull's council, but for the missionaries, to figure out the nuances of Ghanaian law concerning marriage. Unlike the customs of marriage in our country, Ghanaian law recognizes three different forms of marriage. One form, "marriage by Islamic rite," is not prevalent in the area where we labor. "Marriage by ordinance" is a marriage very similar to the practice in North America, where the wedding ceremony is presided over by the officer of the state, whether magistrate or minister. But Ghanaian law also recognizes as lawful marriage what is called "marriage by custom." Such a marriage, with its various cultural elements, including a dowry, is similar to the manner in which the Old Testament patriarchs were married (Gen. 24:50-67; 29:18-30). All marriages must also be registered with the Ghanaian government.

Although we have faced divorce and remarriage in Ghana only in limited numbers, we have discovered that many couples who have been living together in monogamous relationships for long periods of time had not completed their customary marriages according to Ghanaian law. Thus many whom we had thought were lawfully married, we later discovered were actually living in sin. These were great disappointments to Hull's council and the FMC, as was reported to synod. These sins, however, have been and continue to be boldly addressed by our missionaries in teaching and preaching. This teaching, to our joy, has borne positive fruits in many cases. Many couples have come to repentance and have made or are in the process of making their long-term monogamous relationships lawful marriages before God and the state.

These matters point out that the mission work into which God has led us is difficult work.

We would prefer, therefore, (from the viewpoint of our flesh) not to have to face the problems that we face in Ghana. But by the faithful preaching and teaching of our missionaries God gathers His church. We look at those with whom we labor, whom God has called to faith by the preaching of the gospel, and humbly submit to the truth of Isaiah 55:9, "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."

At the same time, we must remember that we are involved in *mission work*. Mission work means *hard work*, oftentimes difficult and disappointing work. This is compounded by the cultural differences that we face. But it is also the work — gospel preaching — by which God gathers sinners and makes them righteous.

It is work to which our churches are called. It is work to which we must be committed, even in the face of difficulties — so long as God gives us positive fruits

upon our labors. It is work which we ought to embrace with joy, knowing that "such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God" (I Cor. 6:11). The God whose gospel we proclaim sent His Son, not to save the righteous, but to bring sinners to repentance. Do we believe that, also when we look at Ghana?

It is my prayer that this historical perspective of the development of the field in Ghana may help the readers of the *Standard Bearer* understand, support, and pray for these labors, and all the mission work that God has given to us as Protestant Reformed Churches.

(Rev.) Steven R. Key
Pastor, Hull PRC
Hull, IA

Response:

The June 2002 editorial informed members of the Protestant Reformed Churches (PRC) and other readers concerning the agenda of the 2002 synod of the PRC. It pointed out certain aspects of the Ghana mission as reported by the Foreign Mission Committee (FMC) that, in the judgment of the editor, demanded the particular attention of synod and that ought to be known by the members of the PRC.

What is troubling about the two aspects of the Ghana mission to which the editorial called attention is not that the missionaries confront ignorance concerning marriage, even adultery, and poverty on the field. Much less is it that the PRC discover that the work in Ghana is "difficult work." Who would have supposed otherwise?

What is troubling is that the FMC in 1996 made the honoring of marriage by the Ghanaians and the education and self-support of the people among whom we would work *grounds* for beginning the work in Ghana, specifically the city of Accra. In proposing these grounds, the FMC itself explicitly distinguished the Ghana field from Jamaica, where the PRC mission

had recently closed in no small part because of an incorrigible contempt for marriage and the family and the failure of men to work. *On these grounds* the synod of 1996 decided to begin the mission in Ghana (see "Acts of Synod and Yearbook 1996 of the Protestant Reformed Churches in America," pp. 57, 165-167).

Then, almost as soon as the work in Ghana is begun, to be informed by the FMC that its ground of an honoring of marriage in Ghana "was not entirely true," even "among the members of our own mission fellowship," and that most of the people with whom we are working are the very poor, who do not work to support themselves but who need benevolence from the PRC to the extent that the "benevolence labors of the missionaries are a significant part of their weekly labors" and that the missionary himself says he is "very busy with consideration of the true benevolent needs of the people" — this is troubling.

— Ed

■ Concern for the Inroads of Common Grace

I have been following your articles on "He Shines in All That's Fair" (*Standard Bearer*, March


15-May 15, '02) with great interest, and as a believer in Jesus Christ find them most edifying.

I would, however, like to offer a comment about the acceptance of this perverse doctrine of common grace. I would readily grant that we have seen the fruition of false doctrine come to its ugly head in the devastation of the Christian Reformed Church, and its uncritical acceptance of the doctrines of this world (and, conversely, the rejection of the true gospel of grace). I would also grant that common grace and the attendant doctrine of the "free offer of the gospel" have made inroads and are generally accepted within conservative Presbyterian and Reformed Churches (one of which, the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, I represent). And I believe that I have just reason to be concerned about the eventual effects of such inroads.

Nonetheless, I do not believe that in our churches this doctrine has taken on the near-confessional status that it seems to have attained in the CRC. It is true that our General Assembly approved a report supporting the free offer of the gospel. Yet, in twenty-five years of ministry I do not recall ever hear-

ing a question about common grace or the free offer during our presbytery exams. You may not fully appreciate this comment if your system for receiving ministers approximates that of the CRC, where the seminary is given the primary responsibility for examining candidates for the gospel ministry. In the OPC we give an exhaustive theological exam on the floor of presbytery for all candidates for the gospel ministry, often lasting many hours. If the free offer, or common grace, is an important doctrine, one would expect at least a question or two about them, and yet, I have heard none.

Naturally, as an opponent of common grace, I do not always appreciate this. In fact, I think that an acceptance of common grace and its worst implications has led to our present controversy about the days of creation, for we argue on a less-than-biblical basis when we accept conclusions from non-Christian scientists. I would indeed like to see us take a clear and unequivocal stand against common grace and all that it implies. Keep up the good work!

(Rev.) Stephen Larson
Santa Ana, CA. 

Candidates



Rodney Kleyn

Age: 29
Wife's Name: Elizabeth
Children: Sarah, Alyssa, Matthew, Aaron
Membership: Southwest PRC, Grandville, MI
Internship: Faith PRC, Jenison, MI
College: Grand Valley State University
Contact:
3818 Michael
Wyoming, MI 49509
(616) 532-0624

Age: 31
Wife's Name: Rebecca
Son: Joseph
Membership: Hope PRC, Walker, MI
Internship: Hull PRC, Hull, IA
College: Grand Valley State University
Contact:
283 Squawbrook Rd.
Wyckoff, NJ 07481
(201) 847-1087

David Overway





PRC SYNOD 2002



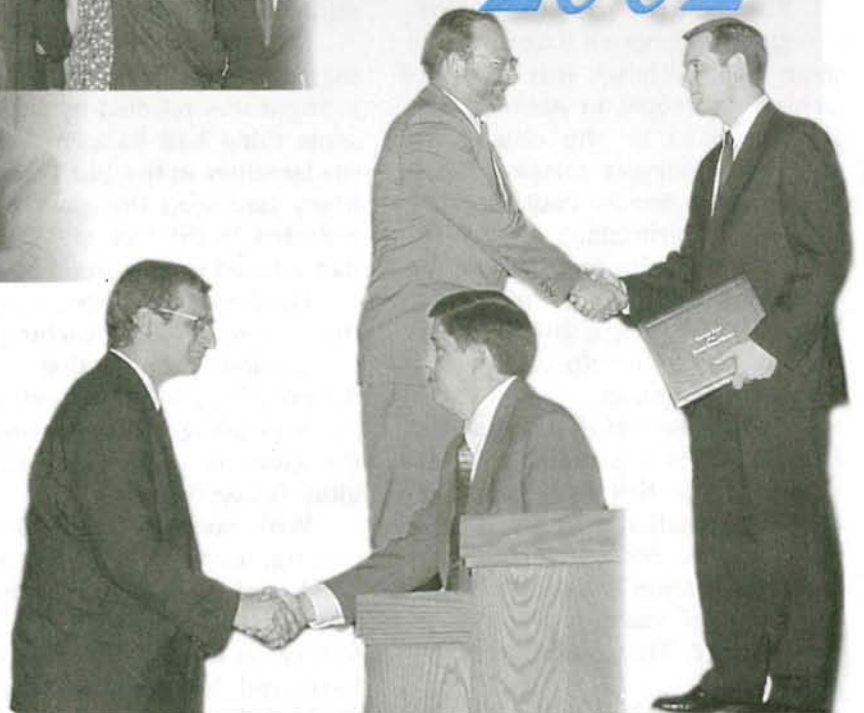


PR SYNOD 2002





GRADUATION 2002



The Character and Work of the Reformed Minister: All Glory to God!* (1)

Seminary graduates of 2002, your graduation from seminary is special for me because you are the first class with whom I was present through all their training in the seminary. We started our time in the seminary the same year and in the same course, namely, six years ago in Greek Grammar. I, and the rest of the faculty with me, rejoice with you today.

The chairman read II Corinthians 4. Although II Corinthians is an inspired letter, it is also particularly personal in nature, written by Paul to the church in Corinth, a former mission labor and congregation for Paul. Because of this, II Corinthians is very instructive for ministers, as well as candidates for the ministry. Among other things, this letter sets forth the relationship of a pastor to the congregation.

One of the issues discussed in this epistle is a problem not unusual in the life of a minister, namely, a challenge to his authority to preach. Some had come into the congregation in Corinth claiming that Paul was not an apostle of Jesus Christ. That is why he wrote

(in chapter 3), "Do we begin again to commend ourselves?" That is to say, Must we really show that we are faithful ministers of God, worthy of being received and honored as such? His answer, in effect, was No. There is no need for that because the believers in Corinth themselves were converted under the preaching of Paul and his fellow laborers. That is proof enough that Paul and the others are ministers of God.

In addition, Paul points out that, even though the Word he had brought was rejected by some, the same thing had happened among the Israelites in the Old Testament. Many had seen the glory of God reflected in the face of Moses but had refused to look upon it.

He climaxed his description of the power of the preaching with the glorious promise that through the preaching of the gospel the believer is changed into the image of the glorious Lord, from glory to glory (I Cor. 3:18)!

With such a high and noble calling, even though he suffer harsh and unjust opposition, Paul affirms, "We faint not" (4:1). Rather, he would continue to labor hard and honestly to bring the truth of the Word of God. And if the gospel that he preached be hidden to some, it is to those who are lost, whom Satan has blinded, lest the light of the glorious gospel should shine into their hearts.

Consider the bold claim implied here: Paul's preaching

causes the light of the glorious gospel to shine into people. Paul grounds that statement in verses 5 and following – "For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord." These verses describe an aspect of the miracle of preaching. We know that preaching is the power of God to save – a wonder of grace. II Corinthians 4:5-7 sets forth the astounding truth that God uses preaching, and mere preachers, to bring His people the glorious knowledge of God, the glory of heaven, and eternal life! God is pleased to use a mere man, a preacher of the gospel, to bring such a message. Nonetheless, what receives the emphasis in these verses is the truth that all glory belongs to God alone. That is the focus of this commencement address, namely, that the character and work of the Reformed minister must yield all glory to God.



First of all, these verses make it plain that a certain preparation is needed for a man to be a Reformed pastor, namely, a work of God in which He shines in the heart of a man to "give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." The point is this: every minister of the Word must know the glory of God!

The glory of God is the radiance or the shining forth of all God's infinite perfections (i.e., His attributes). When Moses asked

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* Seminary Commencement Address, June 17, 2002, Southwest Protestant Reformed Church, Grandville, Michigan.

God to show him His glory, God responded, "I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the *name* of the LORD before thee" (Ex. 33:19). Then we read in Exodus 34:6-7, "And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty."

God is great, highly exalted above all creatures. His attributes are infinite in perfection.

God is glorious! He is glorious in His power, which is revealed in the creation of all things, as well as in His powerful deliverance of Israel out of Egypt. God is glorious in His wisdom, as He planned the whole course of history and the gathering of His people throughout time. He is glorious in His infinite and eternal love for His people. God's glory is seen in His wrath, which is His holiness breaking out against sin. God is glorious in all His works and ways – *the heavens declare the glory of God!*

God is God, and He will be glorified! In fact, He created all things for His glory. He even planned all creatures and events in such a way that He might receive the highest glory possible.

God has determined to reveal this glory in the face of Jesus Christ! That is to say, God reveals Himself and His glory in the person and work of Jesus Christ. Scripture everywhere confirms this. We read in John 1:14, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." Hebrews 1:3 describes the Son as the "brightness of [God's] glory, and the express image of his person. In Christ are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. 2:3).

In all His words and works, Jesus came to reveal the glory of the Father. He did so in His miracles, demonstrating the power of God to deliver from sin and death. He revealed God in all His preaching – teaching the people about the God of their salvation.

But nowhere did the glory of God shine more brilliantly than in the cross! There was the glory of God's love for His people in that He would give His own Son for them. There was revealed the boundless grace – forfeited favor – to sinners. The cross revealed the infinite mercy of God to deliver His people from the dreadful agony of hell that Christ endured. There is the holiness of God – that He hated sin so much that not one sin of His people could remain, every one must be paid for. And behold in the cross the mighty power of God to uphold His dear Son even as God poured out His wrath upon Him.

In Jesus Christ, God's glory shines with a brilliance never before witnessed, even to His resurrection, His ascension into heaven, His sitting down at God's right hand, and, presently, His coming on the clouds with the glory of His Father!

God gives the knowledge of this glory to the minister. Specifically, God gives the *light* of the knowledge of His glory.

These words are related, for knowledge gives light. Here the emphasis is that light reveals and illuminates so one can see. Light stands opposed to all darkness. Darkness represents sin, death, the lie, and corruption. Satan is the prince of darkness who always seeks to obscure the truth with lies. He would shroud the glory of God in the darkness of the lie.

If a person is in spiritual darkness, he does not know what is about him. He is spiritually ignorant. By nature, all men are in darkness – dead in sin and depravity. They are cast away from God into the darkness of spiritual death.

God gives light to the minister by giving him knowledge – the knowledge of the glory of God! This is what your seminary training was intended to do, graduates – to give you the knowledge of God. You learned many texts and definitions, many doctrines. But it was never intended merely to give you a head full of knowledge. Always the focus of the instruction was to give you the *love* of the truth. Always the purpose was to make you see and love the *glory* of God, and to cause you increasingly to know this glory from experience!

But that is not something that man can do. That is God's work. Paul wrote to the Corinthians that *God* hath shined in our hearts!

How did God accomplish this? In a word, by the miracle of regeneration. Paul shows the greatness of this work of regeneration by comparing it to the work of creation. "God," he writes, "commanded the light to shine out of darkness." When did God do this? On the first day of the world, when darkness covered the face of the deep, and God said, Let there be light, and there was light. God called light out of darkness.

That mighty work is a picture of the even greater work of regeneration. God calls spiritual light out of the darkness in our hearts! The heart is black with sin and corruption, but God sovereignly calls forth light! God calls life out of death, and holiness out of corruption! He even calls us out of darkness unto His marvelous light.

How does God do that? God gives eternal life, life from above, life that is communion and fellowship with God. God gives the knowledge of Himself, whom to know is life eternal (John 17:3).

This clearly is not merely knowledge about God, for that is only in a man's *head*. Paul writes that God has shined in *our hearts*. This is the knowledge of experi-

ence, namely, of covenant life with God through Jesus Christ!

The result of this work of God is that the minister knows, from experience, the glory of God. Specifically, he knows the glory of God's power that changed *him* from a dead sinner to being alive unto God! He experiences the sovereign love of God that draws him and binds him to God. He knows the grace, the unmerited favor that has saved him, unworthy sinner that he is. He knows the infinite mercy of God that forgives his many and terrible sins. All this he knows in the face of Jesus Christ! Apart from Christ and His cross, he has nothing.

You graduates have experienced this mighty work of God. You testified before synod that God has worked this in you. You confessed that you believed in Jesus Christ, and that He is your Savior. That is indispensable to the work

of the ministry. No man can do the work of the minister of the gospel unless God shines into his heart the light of the knowledge of the glory of God.


God then, in addition, equips a man by His Holy Spirit and calls him to devote his life to growing in the knowledge of God's glory, so that, as a preacher, he may bring that glorious knowledge to others. He preaches with the desire that the light in his heart would shine in the hearts of the hearers – whether it be for the first time, or whether the light of the glory of God on a particular truth might shine more brightly in the hearts of believers, just as it did in the minister as he studied the Scriptures all week long!

But that light will not shine in the congregation unless that glorious truth has shone first in the heart of the minister! As he mounts the pulpit, the preacher

must know that God hath shined in his heart and given him the light of the knowledge of the glory of God.

What a glorious gospel the Reformed minister has to preach! What shows forth the glory of God more than the power of God to save? The sovereign power of God is revealed against the backdrop of man's total depravity and unworthiness. God saves men who are unable to contribute a thing to their salvation – who do not even want to be saved. God saves those whom He has sovereignly chosen, though they are wholly unworthy of it. He is not helpless or despairing in some supposed desire and attempt to save all men. The gospel of the Reformed minister is God's glorious, sovereign, and particular grace.

And the minister is called to preach.

(...to be continued.) 

Marking the Bulwarks of Zion

Prof. Herman Hanko

Johann Agricola and Antinomianism (2)

Introduction

While Johann Agricola occupied an important place in the Lutheran Reformation, and while he could have been of inestimable help to the cause of the truth of Jesus Christ when that truth was being rescued from the clammy hands of the bishop of Rome, he forfeited his right to occupy this noble place.

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He forfeited his right to occupy such a place because he became a proud man and turned his desires away from advancing the cause of the gospel to his own longing for a more prominent place in the work of the Reformation. He was jealous of Melancthon, and his jealousy of Melancthon spilled over into a jealousy of Luther.

If this were not so serious, it would be ludicrous. It is something like a pygmy aspiring to become a giant; or something like a man who cannot balance his own checkbook to aspire to the head of the mathematics department in

MIT. Agricola had his gifts. Contentment with them and a humble effort to use them in God's kingdom would have enshrined him in the company of those heroes of faith who restored to the church the great gospel of salvation by grace alone. Pride got in the way, and an ignoble heresy of his own invention destroyed his effectiveness.

The History of His Heresy

In 1526 the University of Wittenberg was looking for a full-time professor of theology. Agricola applied for the post. He

was passed over in favor of Philip Melanchthon, the great theologian of the Lutheran Reformation. He never forgot this, and he took out his disappointment on Melanchthon personally.

In 1527 Agricola publicly attacked Melanchthon on the question of the place of the law in the life of the Christian. He did this by driving a wedge between the law and the gospel. Luther was disturbed by this attack on Melanchthon, but also considered Agricola to be a man whose abilities could be put to good use in the cause of the Reformation. Luther, therefore, worked hard to mediate a truce between the views of Melanchthon (which views were also those of Luther) and the aberrations of Agricola. It seems as if Agricola backed down — something he was to do repeatedly in subsequent years when things got a bit too hot. Peace lasted for a while.

But against the wishes of his superior, Agricola left the Latin school in Eisleben and moved to Wittenberg. When Luther's work took him to Smalcald in 1537, Agricola, with great boldness, moved into Luther's position in the church and the university.

As a sort of parenthesis we may note that Luther's trip to Smalcald was in the context of serious troubles in Germany. Germany was ruled by various princes who had effective authority in their own provinces, but who had no authority in other parts of Germany. There was no strong central government, although technically Germany was under the broad rule of Charles V, emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. Periodically the princes would come together in a "Diet" to decide matters of mutual interest and national policy. One of these Diets was the well-known Diet of Worms, where Luther made his historic and courageous stand. But with the Lutheran Reformation, Germany was divided

between Protestant princes and Roman Catholic princes. Germany stood on the brink of civil war when Roman Catholic princes threatened to attack Protestant princes to force Roman Catholicism on Protestant provinces. The Protestant princes came together in Smalcald to form a Protestant union to resist Roman Catholic attacks. Out of this meeting came the famous Articles of Smalcald, in which the Protestant princes outlined what they believed to be the truth of the Word of God. Out of this meeting came also the name "Protestant," which has identified to this day those who oppose Rome. In this historic meeting Luther played a prominent role.

But to get back to Agricola, not only did he simply take over Luther's place in the church and university in Wittenberg, but he also began openly to attack Luther's views. For this he was arrested upon Luther's return, but he escaped. Then followed a series of retractions when Agricola really saw his position endangered, yet these retractions proved to be insincere at every turn of the way. Luther really never trusted Agricola again.

In a limited way Agricola continued to have influence. In 1541 he became court preacher of Joachim II of Brandenburg. He was appointed to a commission at the Diet of Augsburg to prepare an interim agreement between Protestants and Roman Catholics. And he continued to be a preacher of some note.

He died in Berlin on September 22, 1566 at the age of 72.

Agricola's Antinomianism

Agricola was a thorough antinomian. He gained a following within Lutheran circles, which supported him and developed his views. Both Agricola and his followers claimed to represent true Lutheranism. They claimed that Luther had departed from his own teachings and had taken a giant

step back towards Rome. In fact Agricola was so bold as to insist that he was Paul correcting Peter in Antioch, with Luther of course being Peter.

What was it that Agricola taught? The controversy really centered in the question of the necessity of good works. Are good works necessary for the Christian? Agricola answered with a sharp No! Luther said, with equal or greater vehemence, Yes!

But that position generated other statements and doctrines. Agricola taught that the law and the gospel were totally opposed to each other, and that only the gospel ought to be preached in the church. Luther said that the law could not be preached without the gospel, and the gospel could not be preached without the law.

Luther claimed that it was through the law that we come to the knowledge of sin. Agricola claimed that, while this was probably true, the only knowledge of sin which the law stirred up in man was the knowledge of damnation.

Agricola claimed that repentance, the consciousness of sin which saved, and the fear of God arose out of the gospel, not out of the law. Luther taught that it is by the law that the believer comes to the knowledge of sin that leads to repentance.

Jacob Schenk, an ardent follower of Agricola, carried his mentor's views to their extreme. "All who preached the law were possessed of the devil," he said. "Do what you will (that is, live as you please, HH), if you only believe you are saved." "To the galleys with Moses." Faith is perfectly capable of existing without works.

Luther took up certain propositions of Agricola and held a disputation against them on December 18, 1537. Agricola failed to show up for the disputation, but Luther defended his position anyway. It might be profitable to

quote some of the important propositions of Agricola.

i. Repentance is to be taught not from the decalogue or any law of Moses, but from the suffering and death of the Son through the gospel. ii. For Christ says in the last chapter of Luke: "Thus it behooved Christ to die and in this manner to enter into his glory, that repentance and remission of sins might be preached in his name." iii. And Christ, in John, says that the Spirit, not the law, convicts the world of sin. vii. Without anything whatever the Holy Spirit is given and men are justified: this thing [the law] is not necessary to be taught either for the beginning, the middle, or the end of justification. viii. But the Holy Spirit having been given of old is also given perpetually, and men are justified without the law through the gospel concerning Christ alone. xiii. Wherefore, for conserving purity of doctrine we must resist those who teach that the gospel is not to be preached except to those who have been crushed and made contrite through the law. xvi. The law only convicts of sin and that, too, without the Holy Spirit; therefore it convicts unto damnation. xvii. But there is need of a doctrine that not only with great efficacy condemns, but also at the same time saves: but that is the gospel, which teaches conjointly repentance and remission of sins.

While, as I said earlier, there are surely statements in Luther's writing and teaching which, if

wrested out of context, could be quoted in support of this blatantly antinomian position, nevertheless, Luther never taught any such thing. He steadfastly maintained the important place of good works in the life of the believer, even though justification is by faith alone without the works of the law. He insisted, and rightly so, that Agricola's position led directly to a profane and godless life in which a man could live in every fornication and sin and yet go to heaven. "Let us sin that grace may abound" is the conclusion of antinomianism.


The controversy continued after the deaths of Luther and Agricola, and was not officially settled until the adoption of the Formula of Concord in 1576-'77. Article 5 of this confession defines the Lutheran position.

It is no wonder that our Heidelberg Catechism, written in Germany, enters into this question in some detail. It outlines the Reformed position in great detail and in an entirely biblical way. The law, our Catechism insists, is necessary for two reasons. By the law is the knowledge of our misery, because it brings us to the knowledge of our sin (Lord's Day 2). And the law is the rule of gratitude, by the keeping of which we express our thankfulness to God for such a great salvation as He has given to us (Lord's Days 32 & 33). Gratitude makes good works

necessary, says the Catechism, not as the ground of our justification (Lord's Day 24) — a doctrine which the Catechism condemns in almost violent language — but because thankful children are obedient children.

The law is indeed, as Luther said, inescapably attached to the gospel. In fact, Scripture makes clear that the law *is* gospel, for it has the power to convert the soul, to make wise the simple, to enlighten the eyes (Ps. 19:7, 8). David loved God's law (Ps. 119:97) and ascribed to it many blessings of salvation, such as an understanding of God's ways which came to the psalmist through God's precepts (Ps. 119:104).

The law always requires obedience of all men on pain of death, but the law becomes gospel as the perfect law of liberty, or, as James calls it, the royal law, i.e., the law of the kingdom of heaven. As such it is the law which, though broken by man in his transgression, is fulfilled in the perfect obedience of Christ, who kept the law when He suffered the torments of hell. By His perfect obedience Christ fulfilled the law for His people, so that the law is written in their hearts as their rule of gratitude, and the ability to keep that law is given by grace.

This is the gospel which smashes all antinomianism and protects the great truth of justification by faith alone without the works of the law. 

All Around Us

Rev. Kenneth Koole

■ Those 'Oh So Dangerous' Fundamentalists

A good brother recently gave me a tape of a broadcast he recorded from his short-wave ra-

dio. What he had heard he found to be disturbing. He thought I might find it of interest, maybe even for this rubric. He was right. Not only was the subject a matter of interest, a report entitled "Religious Fundamentalism," but it was disturbing as well. I decided it was worth transcribing various seg-

ments of the broadcast with comments as we go along.

Keep in mind that this was broadcast on BBC (the UK's main broadcast network) and therefore was widely heard, and was intended to influence the mainstream European, and even worldwide, audience. What I transcribe

Rev. Koole is pastor of Faith Protestant Reformed Church in Jenison, Michigan.

comes from the second part of a three-part series on Religious Fundamentalism. The occasion, obviously, was the 9/11 attack on the World Trade Center by members of the al-Qaeda terrorists (representing the *Muslim* Fundamentalists, of course). But notice, please, what fundamentalist group it is with which they choose to begin (it's not the Muslims!), and what fundamentalist group it is on which they choose to focus in the entire second half of the broadcast. Not so subtle!

The broadcast begins with a couple of statements about fundamentalists made by people whose perspectives evidently are meant to represent the common view of the man on the street. While religious music plays in the background the first voice we hear says:

Fundamentalists feel profoundly disturbed by the relegation of God and religion to the sidelines of culture, and their efforts are directed to bringing God back to center-stage.

Then comes voice #2.

A fundamentalist, in my view, is a person that has a diagnosis of an underlying personality disorder. And that is a disorder where people can only see black or white. They do not see any gray area. To them a religion offers a set of rules that is really laid out very clear, so that you do not have to doubt or question anything. That's what they want.

The stage having been set, the editor of the piece takes over and directs the interviews for the rest of the broadcast. He states:

Fundamentalists are regarded by many as intelligent, dangerously violent religious freaks. Fundamentalists have, to say the least, an unflattering image. But what are they really like? This week we will travel the world meeting these "fundamentalists."

At the very start of this jour-

ney I arranged to visit in Washington DC one of the world's leading experts on fundamentalists. For six years Scott Appleby was co-director of the "Fundamentalism Project" at the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Writing the research took five volumes. I asked him to summarize the books in just one minute.

Mr. Appleby, the expert, had this to say:

Fundamentalism is first of all reactive. It is reacting against a threat on a way of life, an encroachment on things held dear. Secondly, they select from their sacred scriptures certain teachings and principles that are useful to them. And they also select certain aspects of modernity that are useful to their cause, like stinger missiles, or television networks. Thirdly, they are absolutists. They believe the truth is one. They believe that this truth is for all people, and that everyone else is in error who does not see things their way. Fourthly, they are dualists, which is to say, they believe that the world is divided into the children of light on the one hand, and the children of darkness on the other, good and evil. And then, finally, they are apocalyptic. Fundamentalists literally believe that the sky is falling, that things are truly coming apart, that everyone is in mortal danger and in spiritual crisis. Not everyone knows this, but we are all in it.

So, whom do you think they are suggesting should be numbered with the "stinger-missile" sort of fundamentalists? BBC leaves us with little doubt. The very first visit takes place in Virginia, and the very next sound you hear are a few voices, a family, singing the doxology "Praise God from whom all blessings flow..." to the tune of "Old Hundredth." This family is interviewed, giving their assessment of the world, with its "growing manifestation of evil." The evidence of this evil in

their words "[can be] seen in the availability of pornography on the internet.... And look at what is on our televisions and theaters, anarchy and hatred and slaughter and murder and all the vilest things."

Having demonstrated that this Christian, Bible-believing family is both dualistic and apocalyptic in its outlook on life, the interviewer proceeded to Jerusalem to interview an ultra-orthodox Jewish family (where the emphasis of the adults was upon educating their children in special schools in order to shield their children's minds from the evils and immoralities of the surrounding culture and society). From there the reporter traveled to New Delhi, India, and visited a school run by a very strict sect of the Hindu religion, a school devoted to retaining traditions coming under threats. It was stated that schools such as this one are being established by the hundreds throughout India of late. Those interviewed justified the pressing need for an education stressing their religion's traditional, fundamental beliefs. And last, but not least, the reporter traveled to Pakistan, to a Muslim Fundamentalist school, a school where, we are informed, a number of the Taliban leaders had been educated in the ways of Allah and religious purity. These were all strung together in one seamless line. Wonderful company for Christians to keep, to say the least.

But the real strategy and cunning of the author of the piece became apparent in the concluding segment of the special report. Beginning with the Muslim fundamentalist headmaster, the reporter raised questions about the place of women in the structure of such a society, what they are subjected to ("Women are most useful for household work. Men for outside work," said the headmaster in his heavy, broken English. "But that sounds like im-

prisonment," responded the interviewer); and then he worked back to the Christian family in Virginia once again.

What do all these fundamentalists have in common? The suppression of women, women relegated to subordinate roles and to head-coverings, and the women actually so brainwashed as to defend this role themselves. In the words of the reporter, this is a mentality that is "hauntingly echoed" wherever fundamentalism is found. The Washington 'expert' explains this:

...this strictness over the role of women betrays an uneasiness about gender and sexuality that is common to all fundamentalists' traditions. One scholar came to the conclusion that fundamentalism is a kind of, as he described it, patriarchal protest and response by males, who in traditional societies have usually called the shots, to a changing environment. They feel much less powerful and much less secure. And you could say, putting it in very crude terms, they take it out on their women. So they are very insistent that women conform to certain traditional forms of behavior.

So there you have it. Christianity too, at least our 'brand' of it, and its teaching of male headship, whether biblical or not, is in reality a matter of male insecurity (and hence resentment) which we "take out" on our women. What is this but to suggest, here is the hinge on which the all too common sin of wife abuse swings. Christianity is not the remedy, but the underlying cause. You can imagine how such persistent and 'scholarly' indoctrination plays in modern-day universities. With this kind of press, is it any wonder that biblical Christianity is more and more being given "to say the least, a flattened image"?

But the reporter was far from

finished with Christianity. The entire second half of the report focuses on Christianity as the real extremists to be feared. The reporter focused on Pat Robertson describing the "sincerest Muslim leaders" as teachers of hatred and violence. In response the broadcaster stated:

Of all the religious people I have met in this series, it is the Christians who displayed this absolutism, this distorted and hostile view of other fundamentalists most strongly. Whereas all the Muslims, Hindus, and Jews I spoke to were prepared to acknowledge the notion that there is more than one path to God, fundamentalist Christians point to their Bibles, and say "Only through Jesus Christ can you be saved."

So, of all the fundamentalists the most unreasonable and potentially dangerous are not your "stinger missile" Muslims, it is these "Jesus is the only name under heaven by which men must be saved" Christians. Such is the propaganda. It is clear that, to the unbelieving mind, Christ Jesus is a far greater danger than a stinger missile, or even planes aimed at skyscrapers. How full of dread and hate towards the name of the Lord Jesus the unbelieving mind, especially the twenty-first century mind, is.

The reporter seized on a couple of instances that demonstrate just how full of hate and potential violence the biblical, Christian mind is.

Even Christians who do not comply with the fundamentalists' ideas of right and wrong are condemned. A few days later I see this aspect of the fundamentalist in action at the gay cathedral in Dallas, Texas.... Local fundamentalists often stand outside the church, shouting at the congrega-

tion as they arrive, telling them to turn from their sins. You can see the pain it causes in the eyes of those ... who have heard it all before.

What follows is a brief interview with a 'Christian' lesbian, who spoke of her Baptist father's rejection of her as being "a night of religious violence" which shattered her. And then the reporter goes on to declare that "the same bludgeoning tactic is used by anti-abortion campaigners."

Of course, among this group one has no trouble finding evidence of civil violence, such as burning down various abortion clinics and shooting doctors. The activist pastor interviewed justified such violence as biblical. To give balance, the interviewer did speak with a Christian fundamentalist who was appalled by this violence and condemned it. Still, the point was made: violence is as much a threat from the Bible-thumping Christian side as the Muslim extremists, and here is the real threat to Western society.

The reporter's perspective is clear. "Fundamentalists are much maligned. In the eyes of mainstream society they may overreact to ills of the world. But their attitudes towards those who do not conform to their standards are harsh."

An interesting, and very telling, piece of propaganda. Stay tuned. This is only the beginning. We of the dualistic, apocalyptic, absolutist perspective are going to find ourselves described in the most unflattering language (as the "real threats" to society and peace) more and more as time goes on. He who condemns sin in Christ's name and calls to repentance lest one perish cannot be Caesar's and society's friend. "Away with them!"

... to the
unbelieving mind,
Christ Jesus is a
far greater danger
than a
stinger missile,
or even
planes aimed
at skyscrapers.

■ Significant Truth About Cloning


In a little news blurb, *World Magazine* (June 15, 2002) quotes a few telling statements made by a well respected biologist, Dr. Rudolph Jaenisch, of MIT. Jaenisch goes on record as saying that healthy reproductive cloning is scientifically impossible. The key word here is "healthy." And he is referring to *all* cloning, not just that which involves human DNA. The article states:

"As a scientist I have an obligation to warn against [reproductive cloning]," the respected biologist said in an interview with *Technology Review*.

Regrettably, Dr. Jaenisch supports therapeutic cloning, but says the other sort is impossible. He claims that the artificial process fails to activate the embryo's genome. "Most clones die immedi-

ately, some die later because of gene malfunction, others die at birth, and very few make it to adulthood," he explained. "Now we have hard data to argue that these adults are not normal. We've looked carefully at adult cloned mice and found that they have significantly shortened life spans and have, for example, major pathological alterations in their lives."

This admission is significant. It is possible that God will enable man yet to clone not only animals, but finally human beings as well, and 'without flaw.' But this much is clear, the Creator has said loud and clear, man's attempt to play God and to bring forth life by means of biochemical means is contrary to God's righteous will and a violation of the God-ordained principles of life. And this much is also certain, as the willful violation of the Creator's will brought terrible

consequences upon mankind at the very beginning of time, so it is bound to do again as time reaches its final stages. 

*Against Thy own, whom Thou dost
love,
Their craft Thy foes employ;
They think to cut Thy people off,
Thy Church they would destroy.*

*Thy ancient foes, conspiring still,
With one consent agree,
And they who with Thy people
strive
Make war, O God, with Thee.*

*O God, 'Who in our fathers' time
Didst smite our foes and Thine,
So smite Thy enemies today
Who in their pride combine.*
Psalter 224:2-4

Report of Classis East

Classis East met in regular session on Wednesday, May 8, 2002, at the Southeast PRC. All the churches were represented by two delegates. Present also were the church history students from Covenant Christian High School.


Classis' business was more than routine. Classis spent a great deal of time in closed session considering an appeal of a discipline matter. Classis, furthermore, approved the request for emeritation

from Rev. Dale Kuiper. This emeritation will be effective January 1, 2003. Classis adopted the following resolution regarding Rev. Kuiper: "That classis express its sincere appreciation to Rev. Dale Kuiper for his faithful labors in our churches. We pray that God will continue to bless him and use him in our midst." Rev. Kuiper reminded the classis that he will still be around for the September 2002 meeting of classis but appreciated

the resolution nonetheless.

In other business, classical appointments were granted to Byron Center, Grandville, Trinity, and Covenant; classical expenses were approved in the amount of \$1,277.15.

Classis will meet next at the Trinity PRC on Wednesday, September 11, 2002.

Respectfully submitted,
Jon J. Huiskens,
Stated Clerk 

News From Our Churches

Mr. Benjamin Wigger

Evangelism Activities

The congregation of the Byron Center, MI PRC hosted their annual special service on Sunday evening, June 2. This is the wor-

ship service to which Byron Center makes an extra effort to invite visitors. Since Byron Center is currently without an undershepherd, they invited Prof. R. Dykstra to

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

present a sermon on the subject of how the Lord will return, especially comparing the premillennial position, such as the popular "Left Behind" series promotes, with our amillennial position. Byron Center also intended to have a follow-up Bible Study on Wednesday, June 5, at the Byron Township Hall, led by Rev. R. Cammenga.

Have you ever asked yourself how one deals with the uncertainty of this life? Are the tragic events that we have witnessed since 9/11 without purpose? How ought we to view these last times in which we live? And is there safety to be found in the church institute in these last days? In an effort to answer these and other questions, the congregation of the Bethel PRC in Roselle, IL invited members of their community to hear God's Word on "How to Live in These Uncertain Times." Bethel sponsored this lecture on May 31, with Rev. W. Bruinsma as the speaker.

The Evangelism Committee of the First PRC in Holland, MI just received from the printer the reprinting of the Spanish translations of the late Rev. H. Hoeksema's *Whosoever Will (Todo El Que Quiera)*. The cost of this work was covered by a gift from the Domestic Mission Committee for help with publishing Spanish literature.

The Evangelism Committee of the Southwest PRC in Grandville, MI is planning to produce an album containing all twelve messages on death preached by their missionary pastor, Rev. J. Mahtani. This will be the series that is being broadcast on the Reformed Witness Hour this summer.

Congregation Activities

This summer the congregation of the Bethel PRC in Roselle, IL was invited to participate in a Bible Memory Project. It began on May 19, and young and old members of Bethel were challenged to learn

Psalm 34, beginning with the first two verses that first week and more verses each week until the entire chapter would be learned by the following month.

In late April the Adult Bible Society of the South Holland, IL PRC hosted a special combined meeting for the PR churches in the Chicago area. All young adults and adults from Bethel, Cornerstone, Peace, and South Holland were invited to join for a discussion on the subject, "God's Restraint of Sin."

The congregation of the Trinity PRC in Hudsonville, MI organized a member-wide garage sale on May 15 in their parsonage driveway, with proceeds going towards their piano fund. The choirs of the Loveland, CO PRC and the Bethel PRC in Roselle, IL presented their annual spring concerts in mid May.

School Activities

The Heidelberg School Association in Northwest Chicago met on April 23 and passed a proposal to attempt starting a Kindergarten for the 2002/2003 school year. The implementation of this proposal is contingent on finding a suitable school facility, hiring a teacher, and the enrollment of at least two students.

If you are vacationing in Colorado this summer, we invite you to make use of the Loveland, CO PR Christian School fundraisers, who are again sponsoring a Bed & Breakfast project. This is the fifth year they have offered this service which, from all accounts, has been very successful. For a very reasonable price you will receive a comfortable bed, fellowship with other Christians, and breakfast the next morning. If you will be visiting over Sunday, a noon meal can also be arranged. This summer they are also again offering limited camping arrangements, camping and breakfast, if you will. Interested, or need more information, call ei-

ther Mrs. Gina Solanyk at 970-669-9005, or Mrs. Cindy Poortinga at 970-663-9320.

There was a short dedication chapel at the new Eastside Christian School building in Grand Rapids, MI on May 13 at 9:30 A.M. This dedication was followed that evening with a Commencement ceremony and Open House.

Minister Activities

Since the last "News," much has happened regarding calls and vacant churches. Rev. W. Bruinsma declined the call he had received from the Byron Center, MI PRC. Since that decline, Byron Center presented their congregation with a new trio consisting of the Revs. G. Eriks, J. Slopsema, and C. Terpstra. On June 9 they voted to extend a call to Rev. J. Slopsema.

Rev. C. Haak declined Grandville's call. Their new trio consisted of the Revs. D. Kleyn, J. Slopsema, and R. VanOverloop. They have also extended a call to Rev. J. Slopsema to become their next pastor.

Rev. G. Eriks declined the call he had been extended from the Trinity PRC in Hudsonville, MI.

After Covenant PRC in Wyckoff, NJ received a decline from Rev. K. Koole to serve as their next pastor, they formed a new trio, consisting of the Revs. M. Dick, D. Kleyn, and C. Terpstra. They extended a call to Rev. Kleyn.

NOTICE!!

Classis East will meet in regular session on Wednesday, September 11, 2002 at the Trinity Protestant Reformed Church in Hudsonville, Michigan. Material for this session must be in the hands of the stated clerk no later than August 11, 2002.

Jon J. Huisken,
Stated Clerk

Announcements

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On June 19, 2002,

CLARENCE and ANNE PRINCE

celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary. We are thankful to the Lord for the covenant instruction and spiritual guidance which our parents have given us these past years. It is our prayer that God will continue to uphold and bless them in the years to come.

"Behold, that thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the Lord. The Lord shall bless thee out of Zion: and thou shalt see the good of Jerusalem all the days of thy life. Yea, thou shalt see thy children's children, and peace upon Israel" (Psalm 128:4-6).

- ✿ Chet and Sharon Haveman
Joel and Janna Huiskens
Trevor, Mitchell
Michael and Heidi Haveman
Ethan
- ✿ Douglas and Mary Jane Prince
Hilary

Jenison, Michigan

NOTIFICATION OF CANDIDACY

All Protestant Reformed consistories are hereby informed that the 2002 synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches in America has declared Mr. Rodney Kleyn and Mr. David Overway candidates for the gospel ministry in the Protestant Reformed Churches. Candidates Kleyn and Overway will be eligible for a call on or after July 13, 2002.

Addresses of the candidates are:

Mr. Rodney Kleyn

3818 Michael
Wyoming, MI 49509
(616) 532-0624

Mr. David Overway

283 Squawbrook Rd.
Wyckoff, NJ 07481
(201) 847-1087

Don Doezeema,
Stated Clerk

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

REV. and MRS. J. KORTERING

celebrated their 45th wedding anniversary on June 11, 2002. We, their children and grandchildren, rejoice with them and thank the Lord for these years they have shared together. Though we have been separated from them for the past 11 years during their labors in Singapore, God, in His mercy and love, has kept our family united in Him. Our parents raised us with a love for the Lord and His church. It is our prayer that, together, we may always testify of His goodness. "Our help is in the glorious Name, the Name of matchless worth, of Him to Whom all power belongs, the Lord of heaven and earth" (Ps. 124, Psalter 352).

- ✿ Rev. Barry and Lori Gritters
Curt (and fiancée Julie),
Kevin, Eric, Dan, Brad, Lisa
- ✿ Dennis and Sharon Griess
Cory, Tara, Justin, Seth, Derek,
Joshua
- ✿ Bruce and Joann Klamer
Alyssa, Jaycen, Deanna, Zachary
(Courtney in glory)
- ✿ Leon and Ellen Kamps
Nick, Caleb, Gina, Jake
- ✿ Rick and Carol Bos
Andrew, Kayleigh, Thomas
Singapore

Join Reformed believers from the British Isles & around the world at the

British Reformed Fellowship Family Conference

20-27 July, 2002
at Castlewellan Castle Conference Centre, N. Ireland

Theme: *Assurance of Salvation*

Speakers:

Prof. David Engelsma
(Professor of Dogmatics & O.T. History, Protestant Reformed Seminary, USA)

Rev. Barry Gritters
(Pastor of Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church, USA)

For further details contact
the Booking Secretary,
7 Lislunnan Rd., Kells, Ballymena BT42 3NR, Northern Ireland
or e-mail: anmstewart@lineone.net

Interested persons in North America should get in contact with
Mr. Bill Oomkes,
6299 Wing Ave., Grand Rapids, MI 49512 USA.
Telephone: (616) 698-6697.
E-mail: oomkes@iserv.net

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The council and congregation of Southeast PRC express their Christian sympathy to Mrs. Lorna VanderVennen in the death of her mother,

LINA RHODA.

May she take comfort from the words of the apostle, "But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Corinthians 15:57).

Rev. Dale Kuiper, Pres.
Tim Pipe, Clerk

NOTICE!

Classis West of the Protestant Reformed Churches will be hosted, the Lord willing, by the Edgerton Protestant Reformed Church in Edgerton, Minnesota on Wednesday, September 4, 2002 at 8:30 A.M. An officebearers' conference is being planned for Tuesday, September 3, on the topic: "Justification by Faith Alone! Was Luther Mistaken? Or, Has Protestantism Despised Her Birthright?" All material for the agenda should be in the hands of the stated clerk by Monday, August 5, 2002, thirty days before Classis convenes. Delegates or visitors in need of lodging or transportation from the airport should notify the clerk of Edgerton, Mr. Andrew Brummel, 801 Elizabeth St., Edgerton, MN 56128. Phone: (507) 442-5201. Email: abruml@dtgnet.com

Rev. Daniel Kleyn,
Stated Clerk of Classis West

NOTICE!

Newly-appointed synodical treasurer is:

Mr. David Ondersma, Sr.
3521 North Lake Shore Dr.
Holland, MI 49424
Tel.: (616) 994-0263
Fax: (616) 994-0265

E-mail: sandbank@sirus.com

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On June 17, 2002, our parents and grandparents,

**REV. WILBUR and MARY
BRUINSMA,**

celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary.

We are thankful to our faithful Father for giving us godly parents. It is a blessing to have parents who fear the Lord and see the necessity of training up children in that fear. By God's grace, their Christian instruction and godly example provide a rich heritage. We thank them for teaching us the truths of God's Word so that by it we may continue that covenant line.

We rejoice with them on this special occasion, and pray that the Lord will sustain and guide them in the years to come. May God's covenant promise hold true in their lives and in the generations to follow. "But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children; To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them" (Psalm 103:17, 18).

- ✿ Brad and Trisha Bruinsma
Kari and Skyler
- ✿ Ryan and Heather Mowery
Tori and Ian
- ✿ Mandy Bruinsma
- ✿ Megan Bruinsma
- ✿ Lydia Bruinsma

Kalamazoo, Michigan

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

With joy in our hearts, on May 27, 2002, we celebrated the 25th wedding anniversary of our parents,

**REV. and MRS. AUDRED
SPRIENSMA.**

We are very thankful to our heavenly Father for the many years they have shared together and the abiding love that He has given them. As their children, we are also grateful for their guidance and biblical example throughout the years. We pray that God's love and mercy will continue to shine on them as they prepare to start a new work together in the Philippines. They will be missed very much. "But let all those that put their trust in thee rejoice: let them ever shout for joy, because thou defendest them: let them also that love thy name be joyful in thee. For thou, Lord, wilt bless the righteous; with favour wilt thou compass him as with a shield" (Psalm 5:11, 12).

- ✿ Tom Spriensma
- ✿ Andrew Spriensma
- ✿ Alicia Spriensma
- ✿ Jessica Spriensma
- ✿ Brad and Esther Langerak
Carter

Philippines

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Martha Ladies' Society of Hull PRC extend our sincere Christian sympathy to our members, Mina and Margaret Hoekstra, Jane Hoksbergen, and Bernice and Lois VanMaanen in the passing of their sister and sister-in-law,

ELLA MEANDERING.

May God be with them in their time of sorrow. "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth" (Psalm 131:1, 2).

Bonnie Hoksbergen,
Secretary

Reformed Witness Hour

Date	Topics for July Topic	Text
July 7	"Deliverance from the Body of This Death"	Romans 7:24, 25
July 14	"Dying in Order to Live"	John 12:24-26
July 21	"There Shall Be No More Death"	Revelation 21:4
July 28	"In My Flesh Shall I See God"	Job 19:25-27