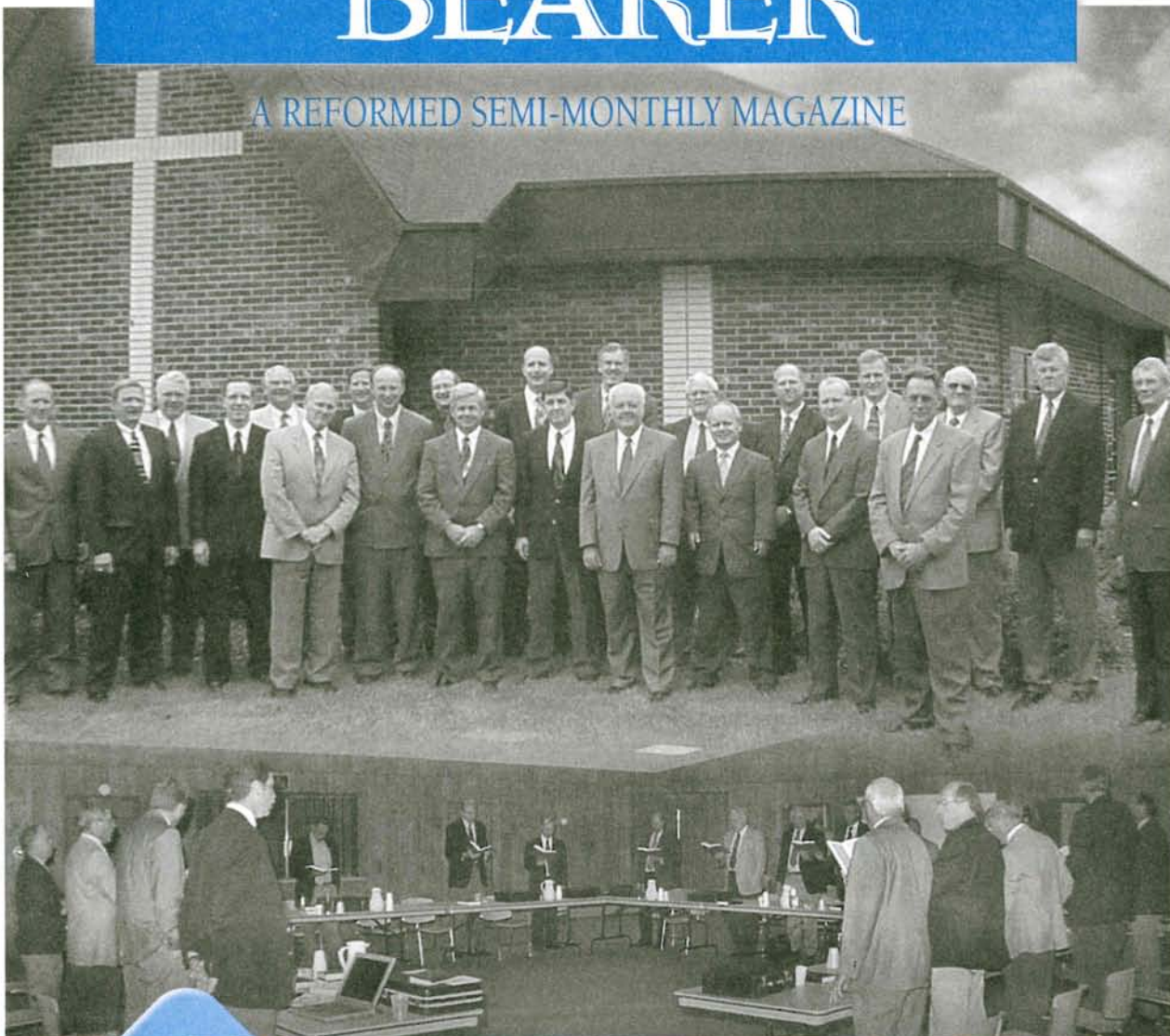


# THE *July 2003* STANDARD BEARER

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE



*PRC*  
**SYNOD** *Highlights*  
*2003*

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Meditation

Rev. James Slopsema

# The Building of the Church

*And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*

Matthew 16:18

Rev. Slopsema is pastor of First Protestant Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan. This Meditation is the text of the pre-synodical sermon preached by Rev. Slopsema on June 9, 2003.

Jesus was with His disciples in Caesarea Philippi. Jesus asked them, "Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?" In response the disciples informed Him, "Some say that thou art John the Baptist; some, Elijah; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets." When Jesus asked who they thought He was, Peter speaking for the group quickly responded, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

To this, Jesus had three related

things to say. First, flesh and blood had not revealed the truth of this confession to Peter and the apostles, but Jesus' Father in heaven. Secondly, upon the rock of this confession Jesus would build His church. Finally, He would give to Peter and the apostles the keys of the kingdom.

Our concern is with the statement of Jesus that He will build His church upon the rock of Peter's confession.

This is a remarkable statement

in light of what had just happened. From the Gospel accounts we learn that Jesus' Galilean ministry had just collapsed. As a result of the miracle of the feeding of the 5,000, the citizens of Capernaum were about to take Jesus by force and make Him their king. But the next day, after Jesus explained that He had come to bring heavenly and not earthly bread, the people followed Him no more. In spite of this, Jesus indicated that He would build His church.

This truth is a great encouragement and comfort to us. As synod we are very much concerned with the welfare of the church, and in particular the PRC. There is much that threatens the church and that threatens our churches. From a human point of view, the future of the church looks very bleak. How comforting are the words of Jesus, "I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." In the confidence of these words of Jesus Christ we must do our work at synod.



I will build my church!

What is the church? From the Greek word for church we get our word "ecclesiastical." The word means "called out." The church is the number of those called out. As the gospel is preached throughout the world, all men are called to repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Often this call falls on deaf ears. However, when the call comes to the ears of the elect of God, it is made effective by the inner working of the Holy Spirit, so that they are sovereignly and irresistibly brought out of the darkness of sin and death into the light of faith and salvation. The church is the number or gathering of the elect called effectively to faith in Jesus Christ.

Jesus calls this church *His* church. The church belongs to Jesus Christ. This is because its members belong to Him. As the name "church" suggests, the

church is not a number of buildings or committees. It is not first of all an organization. The church is the gathering of the elect that are called out of darkness into the light of God's salvation. These belong to Jesus Christ. They belong to Jesus because God eternally gave them to Jesus to save. They belong to Jesus also because Jesus purchased them with His own blood. Synod must bear this in mind in its deliberations. The church does not belong to the synod, or to any member of the synod, to do with as he wishes. The church belongs to Christ. The decisions synod makes must be made with a view to what serves the welfare of Christ's church.

Jesus speaks of building His church. We must be very careful to understand what constitutes the building of the church. Contrary to the thinking of some, the building of the church does not consist in erecting large and beautiful buildings in which to worship. Nor does it consist in slick tactics that draw large crowds and quickly fill the membership roles of the church with people who know very little of Christ and are less dedicated to His service. Nor does building the church mean gaining world recognition for the church.

The building of the church consists rather in the gathering of the church through the call of the gospel. The church is the number or gathering of those who are "called out." Whenever anyone is effectively called out of the darkness of unbelief into the light of faith and salvation, he becomes a living member of the church. This is the building of the church.

The building of the church also consists of the spiritual growth and maturity of her members. After being called to faith and salvation, the believer must grow in grace and knowledge. This is often spoken of as building up the members of the church. This is really the building of the church.

Jesus asserts that the building

of the church is His work. This is true in that it is Jesus who calls His people out of darkness into the light of faith and salvation. He does this in every age and out of every nation. It is Jesus who also builds up each saint spiritually so that he grows in grace and knowledge. Jesus does this in the power of His death and resurrection.

However, Jesus builds His church by the use of means. He uses primarily the preaching of the gospel. In I Corinthians 3:10 Paul indicated that he had laid the foundation of the church of Corinth and that others were building on that foundation. This took place through the preaching. When we as church preach the gospel, we too are building the church. Better yet, Christ is building His church through us. Jesus also uses the sacraments to build His church. And He uses the witness and the fellowship of the saints. These are exactly the matters with which this synod will be dealing. Most of synod's work centers on the preaching of the gospel as it deals with the work of its denominational mission committees and seminary. Even the committee for contact with other churches is focused on these matters. As synod deals with these matters, it must be conscious of their importance. These are the very things Jesus uses to build His church. Let them be handled with care!



Jesus builds His church upon a foundation. Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church.

This rock is not Peter personally, the successors of whom are the popes, as the Roman Catholic Church claims.

The rock upon which Jesus builds His church is the confession Peter had just made, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. What a confession! This is a confession that Jesus is the very Son of God, come into our flesh.



As the Son of God in human flesh, He is also the Christ, the Anointed One, ordained by God to be His Prophet, Priest, and King. This is the heart of the gospel of salvation. All the truths of salvation are implied in that statement. Jesus' atoning death, His and our resurrection to life, His exaltation into heaven to bring us our salvation — all these are implied in this great truth, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. The confession of this truth makes of Peter and the disciples the rock upon which Jesus will build His church.

However, this rock is also, in some sense, Peter. There is obviously a play on words here. The name "Peter" does mean rock. Peter therefore is somehow connected to the rock that serves as the foundation of the church. He is not the foundation personally but by reason of his office. Peter and the other disciples would be given the office of apostle. As apostles they would be the vehicles of divine revelation through whom Christ would more fully reveal the truth of Peter's confession. In that sense Peter is also the foundation.

This has a great deal to say to us as we busy ourselves in the Lord's work of building His

church. The one and only foundation of the church is the confession of the truth of Scripture as it centers in Jesus being the Christ, the Son of the living God. Into this truth the Spirit has led the church throughout the ages. This truth is beautifully set forth in our Reformed creeds. Only when we maintain and proclaim that truth are we employed in building the church. Many bring words of human wisdom and understanding. They also build great things. But they do not build the church. This is because they are building on the wrong foundation. We build the church of Christ only as we build on the foundation of the truth of Scripture. Synod must be careful to promote and maintain the truth in all its deliberations.




And the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

The gates of hell refer to that which storms out of the gates of hell to destroy the church. This is the Devil and his host of fallen demons. They will, if possible, tear down what has already been built up. They also seek to prevent any future building of the church. They seek to accomplish this by means of false doctrine, which under-

mines the very foundation of the church. They resort to persecution. They seek to lure the members of the church away from Christ by the pleasures of sin. If possible they bring dissension into the church.

To use the words of Jesus here, at times it appears as though they will prevail against the church. To "prevail against" means to overpower, to destroy, and to overcome through superior strength. We may be inclined to wonder if indeed the gates of hell will prevail against the church when we look at the apostasy in the church, the declining numbers attending church, the temptations and obstacles we face and will face. But Jesus gives us a glorious assurance. He will build His church. And the gates of hell shall not prevail against the church.

Jesus can give us this assurance exactly because He is the Christ, the Son of the living God. As the Christ, the Son of God, He has atoned for sin at the cross. As Christ, the Son of the living God, He has also been exalted into glory at the right hand of power. Indeed, Jesus will build His church.

In that assurance let us be busy in the Lord's work of building the church. 

## Editorially Speaking

Much of this issue is taken up with the recent synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches. The synod met from June 10 through June 17 in Hudsonville, MI. The meditation is the text of the pre-synodical sermon the evening of June 9 by Rev. James Slopsema, president of last year's synod. The editorial reports some of the major decisions of the synod. A feature article gives the first part of the address at the commencement exercises of two graduates of the Protestant Reformed Seminary. These exercises were held during

the week that synod met and were attended by the synod in a body. The pictures are the photographic work of Don Doezeema, who among his other duties at synod as Stated Clerk of the denomination is always on the prowl for the revealing shot.


There is much about synod, however, that these words and pictures do not—cannot—capture. The large audiences at both the pre-synodical worship service and the commencement exercises. The warm camaraderie among ministers and elders, who are one in the

faith and labor of the Lord Jesus. The occasional humorous remark, sometimes intended, sometimes not (yes, Virginia, once in a while Protestant Reformed synods laugh, *in session*). The elder from Georgetown broke the house up by asking with some asperity whether the august assembly believed in efficiency. The superb catering of the women of Hudsonville, ably aided this year by Don VanOverloop. You had to have been there. Many were, especially during the oral examination of one of the graduates of the seminary.



Synod, assembly of all the churches in the name and Spirit of

the Lord Jesus—showing, promoting, and enjoying the unity of the

church, if not always her efficiency.  
—DJE 

## Editorial

# Major Decisions of the PRC Synod, 2003

**U**nder the leadership of its president, Rev. Ronald VanOverloop, the 2003 synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches (PRC) finished its work early Tuesday afternoon, June 17. Rev. Carl Haak was vice-president; Rev. Steven Key was first clerk; Rev. Charles Terpstra was second clerk.

Synod met in the building of the Hudsonville, Michigan PRC.

Rev. James Slopsema led the worship service with which synod always begins. The service was held on Monday evening, June 9. Rev. Slopsema preached on Matthew 16:18, "I Will Build My Church." The sermon is the meditation in this issue of the *Standard Bearer*.

### Theological Seminary

Much of the first three days of synod was taken up with the oral examination of Mr. William Langerak, senior seminarian at the Protestant Reformed Theological Seminary. Synod approved Mr. Langerak's examination and declared him a candidate for the office of the ministry of the Word and Sacraments in the PRC. Mr. Langerak will be eligible for a call on or after July 12, 2003.

The Theological School Committee conducted graduation exercises for Mr. Langerak and for Mr. Paul Goh, the other senior seminarian at the Protestant Reformed Seminary, on the evening of June 16. Prof. David J. Engelsma spoke on "The Indispensable Qualification for the Gospel-Ministry." The

first part of this address appears elsewhere in this issue. Elder Loh Peng Kee, official representative of the Contact Committee of the Evangelical Reformed Churches in Singapore (ERCS), expressed the thanks of the Singapore churches for the help of the PRC particularly in training their seminarians. On behalf of the ERCS, he presented the seminary with the gift of a lovely clock.

Another important decision concerning the seminary was synod's appointment of Rev. Barrett Gritters, pastor of the Hudsonville, Michigan congregation, as Professor of Practical Theology and New Testament. He is to replace Prof. Robert Decker, who is retiring. Rev. Gritters has three weeks to decide on the appointment. Synod chose Rev. Ronald Cammenga as alternate.

Synod granted Prof. Russell Dykstra permanent tenure at the seminary. Prof. Dykstra has completed seven years of commendable work at the seminary. The admission of one student to the seminary in the coming year was approved. That only one man is entering seminary this coming school year points up the need in the PRC for men who are moved by Christ to seek the ministry. There are three vacant churches; Hull, Iowa continues to call a second missionary to Ghana; in the next four years—the time of one's seminary training—men now active in the ministry will reach, or be nearing, the age of emeritation.

Synod adopted a proposed

change to Article X of the Constitution of the Theological School Committee that requires consistories to be more thorough in their recommendation of men to the seminary. The change requires a consistory's recommendation to explain that the aspiring seminarian

is a member in full communion, sound in faith, upright in walk, and exhibits the qualities and personality necessary for a gospel minister. Such recommendation ought to contain the consistory's evaluation of the applicant's spiritual and intellectual gifts, as well as any areas of concern. The application shall also provide a certificate from a reputable physician showing him to be in good health.

### Contact with Other Churches

The Committee for Contact with Other Churches (CC) informed synod of encouraging contact with the Orthodox Christian Reformed Church of Wingham, Ontario, Canada. The consistory of this congregation has sought contact with the PRC. At the request of Wingham, synod approved occasional pulpit supply by Protestant Reformed ministers and the administration of the Lord's Supper, subject to certain stipulations. All of the consistory members of the Wingham congregation were present at synod for two full days. During this time, the student was examined, and synod discussed the matters of contact with Wingham. Later, synod received a letter from the Wingham consistory expressing the appreciation of the

consistory members for their warm reception by synod and by members of the PRC and for the Reformed character of the deliberations of synod. Synod encouraged the CC to work with the Wingham congregation in seeking closer ties with the PRC.

Synod approved participation of the PRC in an international conference in Australia in 2005 that is being planned by the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Australia (EPC). At the time of the conference, a professor of the Protestant Reformed Seminary will teach a post-graduate course for the ministers of the EPC, as the EPC has requested.

The CC informed synod that the Committee for Ecumenical and Interchurch Relations of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church has invited the CC to meet with them in Philadelphia this September to discuss the paper by John Murray and Ned Stonehouse on the "free offer of the gospel." Synod approved the acceptance of the invitation by the CC.

Synod instructed its CC

to express to the Evangelical Reformed Churches in Singapore (ERCS) the urgent need for the ERCS to come to a stand as a denomination on [the] divorce/remarriage issue.... The PRC urge the ERCS to see the need to place priority at this time in their denominational life to arrive at a denominational stance on the issues relating to divorce and remarriage.... Therefore, the PRC encourage our sister church—the ERCS—prayerfully and diligently to pursue their study on these issues, using the resources of our minister-on-loan as well as the development of these truths in the PRC, in order to arrive at a clear and biblical denominational position on the issue of divorce and remarriage, to God's glory, the unity of our denominations, and the spiritual well-being of her members.

Synod decided to send emissar-

ies annually to the ERCS and invited the ERCS to send emissaries to the annual synod of the PRC, in order to develop further the sister-church relationship.

### **Foreign Missions**

Both Rev. Wayne Bekkering, missionary to Ghana, and Rev. Audred Spriensma, missionary to the Philippines, were present at synod. Both addressed synod concerning their work. The discussion of foreign missions resulted in synod's appointing a study committee to investigate the existing policies in our various synodical committees regarding furloughs and vacations for missionaries and the existing policies in other denominations relative furloughs and vacations for missionaries. This committee is to advise Synod 2004 on establishing a coherent and equitable policy regarding furloughs and vacations for our missionaries and for our minister-on-loan. The study committee is Mr. David Ondersma and Mr. Donald Doezeema.

### **Domestic Missions**

On the recommendation of the Hudsonville Council and the Domestic Mission Committee (DMC), synod decided to continue the work with the Covenant Protestant Reformed Fellowship in Northern Ireland with Ballymena as the base of mission labors in the British Isles. Consisting now of six families and five individuals, the Fellowship is united and committed to the Reformed faith in every respect. Hudsonville Council has informed synod that it will propose to the congregation to call Rev. Angus Stewart by approbation as missionary to the British Isles. Synod had earlier in its sessions approved the actions of its synodical deputies in concurring with the decision of Classis East to receive Rev. Stewart as a minister of the PRC.

Synod heard a letter from the

Covenant Protestant Reformed Fellowship of Northern Ireland expressing the gratitude of the Fellowship to the PRC for their support during the recent troubles of the church in Northern Ireland. Mr. Ivan Reid, sent by the Fellowship for this purpose, addressed synod on behalf of the Fellowship, informing synod of the present condition of the work and thanking the PRC for their continuing support.

The DMC informed synod of the disbanding of the church in Spokane, Washington with which missionary Thomas Miersma had been working. Synod decided to renew the work in Spokane with some families that remain committed to the PRC and their work by means of Rev. Miersma.

### **Other Matters of Interest**

The 2002 Synod had instructed Classis East to inquire into the viability of Covenant PRC, Wyckoff, New Jersey. Classis East reported to synod that Covenant, though small, is a viable congregation. This year's synod decided to inform Classis East that if the present situation in Covenant continues, approval of subsidy by synod will be in jeopardy. The grounds include that the small size of Covenant is not conducive to good spiritual life in the congregation; that certain circumstances in the congregation are cause for serious concern, among which is that the majority of young people do not remain with the congregation; and that it is not good stewardship of finances or pastors to continue to support congregations of this small size to which God does not give growth. Classis East will monitor the condition of the Covenant congregation and evangelism activity of Covenant.

Synod was informed by its Yearbook Committee that the denomination grew by some 35 families the past year. The PRC now number more than 1,700 families and nearly 7,000 members.



Synod adopted a budget for denominational work in the amount of \$1,599,415. Of this, about \$705,400, or almost half of the total budget, is for missions, including the minister-on-loan to the Singapore churches. \$445,900 is for

the Theological Seminary. Each family in the denomination will be assessed \$845 in 2004 for denominational work. This is the same as in 2003.

Synod accepted the invitation of the Hull, Iowa church to host

the 2004 meeting of synod. Synod will convene in Hull, Iowa on June 8, 2004, God willing.

It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to the synod of the PRC so to decide.

— DJE 

## Letters

### Questions about "God's Hatred of Lying"

I enjoyed Rev. Eriks' recent article on lying ("God's Hatred of Lying," *Standard Bearer*, April 15, 2003). It is distressing that lying has become so prevalent in our society. I also especially appreciated the conclusion of the article on "speaking the truth in love." Sometimes speaking the truth in a loving manner is actually more difficult than simply refraining from lying.

I do, however, have a few questions that I am hoping you can answer. Another passage of Scripture (in addition to the story of Rahab hiding the spies) that seems to suggest God approving of lying in certain cases is Exodus 1:19-21. Verse 19 details the lie that the midwives told Pharaoh, and verse 20 says, "Therefore God dealt well with the midwives." How would you explain this passage?

Another instance with which I struggle to condemn lying would be with individuals who hid Jews during WWII and lied to the Nazi soldiers who came looking for them. Was it really a sin for these individuals to lie in order to save these Jews from almost certain death? I have also read about German soldiers who discovered Jews hiding in homes and yet lied to their commanding officers by telling them there were no Jews there (was that really wrong of them?).

Finally, it seems that certain occupations almost require lying. A spy would certainly have to lie or at least deceive in order to be successful. In fact, much of the intelli-

gence the U.S. received in Iraq came from Iraqis who feigned loyalty to the regime of Saddam Hussein and yet funneled information to the United States. I also think about undercover police officers who assume false identities in order more effectively to fight crime.

Joe Venema  
Burlington, WA

#### RESPONSE:

The questions the correspondent raises focus on the question, "Does God really hate *all* lying? Or, are there any instances when we may lie?" In this connection, the reader asks about Exodus 1:19-21: does this passage provide an instance when God approves the lie? It is true that verse 19 records the lie of the midwives to Pharaoh, which is followed in verse 20 by "Therefore, God dealt well with the midwives...." But this does not necessarily mean that because the midwives lied God dealt well with the midwives. It is more likely that the Lord dealt well with the midwives because the midwives kept the children of Israel alive, which was disobedience to Pharaoh's command. This meaning is supported by the last part of verse 20, "and the people multiplied and waxed very mighty." God's blessing upon Israel was that they grew numerically. This was not because the midwives lied, but because they saved the children alive. Therefore, Exodus 1:19-21 does not say that God approved the midwives' lie. John Calvin, in his commentary on this passage, has this to say:

Some assert that this kind of lie, which they call "the lie officious, or serviceable," is not reprehensible; because they think that there is no fault where no deceit for the purpose of injury is used. But I hold, that whatever is opposed to the nature of God is sinful; and on this ground all dissimulation, whether in word or deed, is condemned.... Wherefore both points must be admitted, that the two women lied, and, since lying is displeasing to God, that they sinned.

What John Calvin says applies to all lying, which brings us to the crux of the matter. Scripture teaches that God hates all lying. God hates lying because it is opposed to His nature. Deuteronomy 32:4 teaches that God is "a God of truth." Satan is the father of the lie. Lying originates in Satan. Therefore God hates the lie, cannot lie, and only loves the truth. The clear testimony of Scripture is that God hates all lying. None of the passages speaking of God's hatred of the lie provide any exception to the rule. Therefore, the problem that we face is not that Scripture is unclear. The difficulty we face is applying this truth to our lives.

This then must be applied to those individuals who lied to the Nazi soldiers to save Jews from almost certain death. It is easy for us, being removed from the situation, to look down on those who lied about hiding Jews and conclude that they sinned. Would I have done any differently? I don't know. Maybe not. Our hearts go out to those who were so horribly impris-




oned and killed in the Nazi concentration camps. To tell Nazi soldiers that Jews were hiding in my home, which would send them to a camp and maybe even death, would be extremely difficult to do. But we must apply God's Word to the situations in which we find ourselves. God hates the lie. To lie is a sin. Therefore, to lie even for what may be a good motive is still sin. The ends do not justify the means. We must not look for exceptions to speaking the truth, but *always* we

must speak the truth in love.

Finally, the occupation of being a spy was brought up in this connection. Being a spy would not necessarily require lying. Remember God commanded Israel to send out spies into the land of Canaan. To hide one's identity to obtain information behind enemy lines would not necessarily require lying. Because of the lying to which spying might lead, it would be very difficult for a Christian to be a spy.

The struggle for us often is not

whether or not we may lie, but what exactly is a lie? In some circumstances what or what is not a lie is not so easily determined. But we know that God sees and knows all things. He will judge the motives and the outward deeds of all men. So in regard to lying, we will let God judge and we will strive, in dependence on God's grace and wisdom, to walk in His fear by speaking the truth in love *always*.

— Rev. Garrett Eriks 

## Feature Article

Prof. David Engelsma

# The Indispensable Qualification for the Gospel-Ministry

*So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs....*

John 21:15-23

## Introduction

**M**r. Goh and Mr. Langerak, the two graduates of the Protestant Reformed Seminary, have received significant testimony that they are qualified for the gospel-ministry. Both of them are aware that they are qualified for the ministry in important respects.

In the case of Mr. Langerak, the Protestant Reformed Seminary has approved him as qualified on the basis of four years of instruction,

examination, and oversight. The synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches has just judged him qualified after thorough examination. In the case of Mr. Goh, the Protestant Reformed Seminary has approved him as qualified. His examination by a major church assembly awaits the meeting of the Evangelical Reformed Churches in Singapore later this year.

As regards such vitally important areas concerning the ministry as competency in the original languages, exegesis, doctrinal knowledge and soundness, the ability to make and deliver sermons, and much more, these men are qualified for the ministry.

In addition, they have shown the faculty and the churches requisite spiritual qualifications, such as reverence of God, humility, holiness, faithfulness in their work, and the like.

They themselves know very well that they are qualified in these respects. They must have this confidence. They may not enter the ministry doubtful whether they have the necessary qualifications.

Important, even necessary, as all these qualifications are, if the graduates should lack one other qualification—the indispensable qualification—they would be unfit for the ministry. One qualification is indispensable. It does not make the others unnecessary, or even detract from their importance. But without this qualification, the possession and exercise of the others are of no benefit to the minister. In addition, the likelihood is that, no matter how qualified a man may be in other respects, lacking this qualification he will make shipwreck of his ministry, sooner or later, with great damage to the fold of Christ. The minister will himself come to grief. Christ will see to it.

On the other hand, a minister with only average qualifications in other respects *who has the indispensable qualification in rich measure* will have a fruitful ministry. Such is the power of the indispensable qualification. And Christ will see to it that the man thus qualified has a prosperous ministry.

The relation between the in-

*Prof. Engelsma is professor of Dogmatics and Old Testament in the Theological School of the Protestant Reformed Churches. This article is the text of the address given at the commencement exercises of the Protestant Reformed Theological Seminary in the auditorium of the Hudsonville, MI Protestant Reformed Church on June 16, 2003.*



dispensable qualification and the other qualifications for the ministry is like that between "charity" and the gifts in I Corinthians 13:1-3:

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.

In the final analysis, only the minister himself knows that he has this qualification, as only he himself is conscious throughout his ministry that his work is motivated and characterized by this qualification. Others cannot judge: not seminary faculties, not synods, not consistories, not one's colleagues. Only the man himself knows—and Jesus Christ. Possession and exercise of this qualification are between the minister and Christ.

The conviction of a seminary graduate that he has this qualification, therefore, comes by way of a question that Christ Himself puts to him directly, a question that the seminarian answers directly to Him. This is the question Jesus put to Peter on the shore of Galilee, according to John 21:15ff.

### A Matter of the Ministry

We know *that* there is an indispensable qualification for the ministry, and we know *what* it is, from the question that Jesus put to Peter when He restored Peter to the office of the ministry. By virtue of Peter's denial of Jesus three times in the courtyard of the high priest, Peter was "*de facto* (to quote Article 53 of the Church Order) suspended from his office." Now Christ reinstates Peter. This is evi-

dent from the charge: "Feed my lambs and sheep." Reinstatement into office is the force of the command, "Follow me." The command is not a call to personal discipleship as a believer, but the call to follow Christ as an apostle, preacher, and elder in the church. The command, as well as the circumstances, is the very same as the command and circumstances of Christ's original call of Simon to the office of the ministry. Matthew 4:18ff. relates that Jesus at the sea of Galilee saw Peter casting a net into the sea and said, "Follow me, and I will make you [a] fisher of men."

The indispensable qualification is stated in Jesus' searching question, repeated three times to correspond to Peter's three denials of Christ: "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?" That was the indispensable qualification for the ministry of Simon Peter. Without that qualification, he would have been unfit for the ministry. Lacking that qualification, his suspension would not have been lifted. Rather, the Lord would have proceeded to Peter's deposition.

This is the indispensable qualification for the gospel-ministry for every minister.

Jesus puts this same question to the two graduates of the Protestant Reformed Seminary prior to their ordination, as He did, and still does, to all of us who are undershepherds in His church.

### Love for Jesus

The minister's love for Jesus is the fundamental qualification for the ministry.

Does the minister regard Jesus as precious—uniquely precious? Does he seek Jesus' good—above all else? Does he devote himself to Jesus with all his gifts and in all his work—as the sole goal of his life and labor? Is the minister in communion with Jesus as his friend—his dearest friend?

Is love for Jesus the reason why, in Peter's case, he desired re-

instatement in his office, and the reason why, in the case of our two graduates, they aspire to the ministry?

Is love for Jesus the motive of the use of all the natural and academic qualifications—the intellectual ability, the ability to speak effectively, the knowledge of the languages, the grasp of history and dogmas? Is love for Jesus the explanation of all the spiritual gifts—the reverence of God, the humility, the patience, the holiness?

Is love for Jesus why the graduates will preach? why they will teach catechism? why they will visit the sick and dying? why they will go after the wayward? why they will marry the youth? why they will bury the old? why they will write and lecture? why they will defend the faith?

Love for Jesus is indispensable!

He said so.

About one qualification He asked His apostle at the solemn ceremony of reinstatement: "Do you love me?"

Though I preach with the tongue of John Chrysostom, and do not love Jesus, I am sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

Though I have the knowledge of John Calvin, and have not love for Jesus, I am nothing.

Though I give myself to the needy saints in pastoral work like a Martin Bucer, and have not love for Jesus, it profits me nothing.

That the indispensable qualification is love for Jesus is right. Jesus is worthy of the love of the ministers in His church. He is worthy that all the work in the church be devoted to Him.

On the occasion of Peter's reinstatement, Jesus showed Himself as the one who is risen from the dead. This is the preface to the account of Peter's reinstatement: "This is now the third time that Jesus shewed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead" (v. 14).

As risen, Jesus Christ is re-



vealed as the eternal Son of God. Peter acknowledged this when he said, "Thou knowest all things" (v. 17). Only God is omniscient. If Jesus is omniscient, He is God. He is God in human flesh. And as God in the flesh, Jesus ought to be loved: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength."


As risen, Jesus is revealed as

the Savior who has redeemed the church, including elect, godly ministers, from sin and death by the sacrifice of Himself. We are His, body and soul, with all our knowledge of Hebrew and Greek, all our ability to preach and teach, all our books and papers. We are His who loved us so, and gave Himself for us. As our Savior and Lord, He ought to be loved by us.

As risen, He is revealed as the

head of the church, so that the church exists for Him and for the glory of God in Him. The head ought to be loved by the body and its members.

"Lovest thou me?" is a claim by Jesus, an awesome claim: "I am worthy that in all the history of the church in the world all that is done by and for the church be done out of love for me."

(to be cont.) 

## All Around Us

Rev. Gise VanBaren

### ■ Sad Developments in the CRC on Homosexuality

The following article is not a pleasant one to write. Yet we must be aware of some of the sad developments in the church world today—also within the Christian Reformed Church (our "mother").

An article appeared in *Christian Renewal*, March 31, 2003, that expresses a cry of alarm because of developments in the CRC in Canada. The alarm is because of a twofold development. First, a committee in the CRC in Canada has the mandate, I understand, to maintain contact with the government. This committee has presented to the Canadian government a document that presumably represents the position of the CRC on the subject of homosexuality. It is a document that, according to the article, has not been proposed by the churches or church councils there and is not even seen by most of the members and clergy.

Hardly is that consistent with Reformed church government. Secondly, the submitted document expresses views on homosexuality inconsistent with the teachings of

Scripture and, in fact, even contrary to the adopted position of the CRC on the subject. Hermina Dykxhoorn, in an article titled "The church's unprophetic utterings on a crucial issue," writes:

As CRC members we were often frustrated and angered by the plethora of documents, statements and announcements made to the Press and to Government without the knowledge of either clergy or membership, on subjects that had neither been thoroughly debated nor bore any resemblance to orthodox Christianity. I hazard to guess that a very small percentage of the CRC membership today has the foggiest notion that the Committee for Contact with the Government of the CRC even exists, much less that it has made a presentation on their behalf to the Federal Government calling for the normalization in law of sodomy. Pity.

And what did this committee submit to the government to generate the above conclusions? After recounting an incident with another such committee in connection with the subject of abortion, the writer states:

I thought of this, and many similar incidents I've experienced since, when I read the official submission of the CRC to the House of Commons Standing Committee

on Justice and Human Rights hearings on Same-sex Unions.

The submission, "Same-sex Unions: A Case for a Just Pluralism," opens with a lofty "assumption," that "people have intrinsic dignity and related rights because they are created in the image of God, no matter what their creed, colour, ethnicity, or sexual orientation." While, indeed, every human being is created in the image of God and, therefore, has dignity, the sins we commit most certainly are not. Creed, colour and ethnicity have nothing to do with behaviour. Homosexuality does. Homosexual behaviour is changeable, it is not immutable and the only thing that distinguishes homosexual persons is their sexual conduct. Never before has conduct or behaviour ever fallen into the category of human rights.

"The Synod of the CRC has indicated that the denial of civil and social rights for homosexual persons threatens justice," continues the document. It's true that everyone, including homosexuals, as individuals, should have certain basic rights by virtue of their personhood—the right to life, to safety, to food, to housing and to work. But to extend these "rights" to include the right to have sinful behaviour affirmed by government and rewarded with material benefit does not naturally follow. No one has a "right" to a sexual relationship or to marriage. If we had a right to these, it follows that someone (government?) would

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have the duty to provide them for us, an obviously ludicrous situation. Sex and marriage are gifts given to mankind by God, gifts to be used within distinct parameters that are spelled out in His Word. The task of the Church is to give witness to God's will not to conform itself to the sinful will of man.

The article shows several other serious and erroneous conclusions presented to the Canadian government as the position of the CRC. Very effectively the author points out how these conclusions are not consistent with the teachings of Scripture. The writer then indicates some final errors presented in this position paper:

The authors instruct church members that they *"ought to affirm the validity of legal recognition of long-term and committed same-sex interdependent relationships."* Church members are now to be obligated to accede to sexual relationships that are clearly opposed in God's Word. I am obligated by God to "Love my neighbour as myself." Therefore, I must treat my homosexual neighbour just as I treat my heterosexual one: with courtesy. But civility on a personal level doesn't mean I am obligated to support legal recognition and even benefit for relationships that are destructive to society and to the individuals involved. Homosexual relationships are seldom long term and even more seldom monogamous. It is not "just," nor is it "kind," to reward a lifestyle which is demonstrably harmful to those participating in it. There is nothing loving about affirming this lifestyle and encouraging its practice. In fact, it's often deadly.

In calling for the definition of marriage to remain in the preamble of any new legislation, the CRC calls for an *"equivalency arrangement."* In their words, this *"legal arrangement should have a functioning similarity to marriage without redefining it (marriage)."* The reason given for keeping the definition of marriage intact is that, *"marriage is a richly textured*

*institution with a unique and internally defined identity."* The clear Biblical definition of marriage, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh" is not "internally defined." It is externally defined by God. Homosexuals "internally define" their relationships as marriage and they are challenging the state and the Church to conform to their "internal definition." The Biblical definition of marriage might not stand against homosexual challenge in a modern Canadian court of law, but the Church using it, would at least have God's truth rather than man's lies on his side.

The homosexual movement is attempting, in a well organized global campaign, to replace the Christian sexual ethic with sexual anarchy. Their ultimate goal is the elimination of Christ and of His Church....

...The authors sum up their arguments with, *"We recognize that there are competing values concerning marriage and interdependent relationships in our pluralistic society. We call on the Christian community, same sex rights advocates, and Canadian society to resist the temptation to use law to give supremacy to one set of values over the other."* The law has always given supremacy to one set of values over the other. God certainly does. To do otherwise is moral anarchy....

The author rightly points out that the document represents a "moral relativism, the accommodation to the world." So it is indeed.

At Calvin College there was a "Ribbon Week" on April 21-25. The announcement reads:

Ribbon Week 2003 will be held April 21-25. The goals of Ribbon Week are (1) to promote awareness that there are gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered and questioning (GLBTQ) people who are part of the Calvin community, (2) to show love and respect for those who are GLBTQ, (3) to educate the Calvin community about these issues, and (4) to provide an opportunity for repen-

tance for those who have oppressed or shown prejudice against GLBTQ persons. To promote these goals, the Ribbon Week Committee has planned the following events....

And in the Calvin College Chimes, there appeared articles on the subject as well. One was, "Ribbon Week embraces diversity." The staff writer, Becca Morrison, states:

"I promise to love and respect my gay and lesbian brothers and sisters and to pray for their protection" is the phrase that appeared on the pages handed out in Tuesday's chapel. Why? This week, April 8-12, marks Calvin's annual Ribbon Week.

Calvin held a number of events in honor of the week. Many students around campus have worn purple ribbons on their clothes to show their love and respect. Chaplain Cooper spoke in Tuesday's chapel on the ideas and potentials of Ribbon Week. Moment of silence ensued on the Commons lawn. Four Calvin people told their unique stories during a panel discussion on Tuesday night in the LabTheatre. A film entitled "The Eyes of Tammy Faye" was shown in the Commons Lecture Hall on Wednesday night.

In Cooper's chapel talk, he laid out some goals of the week. He stressed the importance of promoting awareness of those questioning their sexuality, and to educate people about the issues concerning homosexuality. Cooper also spoke of the need for repentance of those who are prejudice (sic) against homosexuals.

"We have differences, it's how we handle the differences that either brings God honor or not. It's my deepest longing that we would bring Jesus Christ pleasure this week," Cooper said. In closing, he said, "We can be angels of help for others," he said, "We are called upon to understand, accept and love other people."

It becomes ever clearer that the



same kind of constant agitation, and then appeals to synod, that led to the acceptance of "women in office" is now taking place in the matter of homosexuality. After all, it's a matter of the "genes." One cannot change the nature God has given. So the church must lovingly accept such without condemnation and without demanding repentance. Of course, it is said that kleptomaniacs also have a "genetic disposition" to steal. Drunkards have a "genetic disposition" to overindulge in drinking. Sexual deviates have a "genetic disposition" towards this too. Do we allow all of this to continue—and show loving concern by condoning it?

It is true that there is a matter of "genetic disposition" to sin. Scripture speaks of this too: "As in Adam all died...." We are "conceived and born" in sin. Does this mean the church must condone and accept this? Does it not rather make the command to repent and believe all the more urgent? The latter is the proper expression of Christian love.

*World* magazine has its own report and evaluation on Calvin College and its increasingly liberal stance (May 10, 2003). *World* recognizes the academic excellency of the college but points out that developments in that college are far from encouraging. It reports also on this matter of homosexuality (as well as the "women in office" issue):

Mr. Carpenter [Provost at Calvin] told WORLD that Calvin and the CRC are in sync on the topic of homosexuality: *Being* homosexual isn't sinful, while having homosexual sex is. Vice president for student life Shirley Hoogstra (quoting from a CRC position statement) explained that since "science has not given us a definitive answer on the origins of same-sex attraction," homosexuals deserve compassion. Calvin critics counter by saying that, of course, any person strug-

gling with sin deserves compassion—but not because of gaps in science. Some cite the first chapter of Romans as God's definitive answer on the origins of same-sex attraction: Because men worshipped and served created things rather than their Creator, God gave them up to their own lust and homosexual desire was one result.

Nevertheless, Calvin has since 2002 observed something called "Ribbon Week," during which heterosexual students wear ribbons to show their support for those who desire to sleep with people of the same sex. Calvin President Gaylen Byker's rationale for Ribbon Week might indicate an odd, victim-mentality view of homosexuality, and it won't win him any points with gay-rights groups. Asked why, if it's only sexual behavior and not aberrant sexual thought that is sinful, Calvin didn't sponsor observance weeks for students struggling with other sexual sin, he replied, "Because homosexuality is qualitatively different from other sexual sin. It is a disorder not chosen by the person." Having Ribbon Week, he said, "is like having cerebral palsy week."

Pro-homosexuality material has crept into Calvin's curriculum. The school offers a gender-studies minor, with a video library that includes *Pink Triangles*, a documentary that criticizes "homophobic attitudes and the enforcement of rigid sex roles in our culture." Meanwhile, the minor program's official website links to such groups as the Gay, Lesbian, Straight Educational Network, the group that brought us "Fistgate," the infamous state-funded workshop in Massachusetts that included gay-sex how-to presentations for high-school students.

The article continues:

Twenty years ago, the party line blurred on traditional biblical theories of origins, resulting in a protracted ground war. In the end, a theoretical détente allowed for the teaching of theistic evolution. Mr. Byker summed up Calvin's teachings on origins this

way: "We deal with a variety of approaches to origins, and we don't teach any of these things as the only way to look at it. We teach a deep respect for the Bible as teaching *that* God created the world, but that the Bible may not have been intended as a recipe book for *how* He did it."

Such a statement might shock some Calvin donors, according to Jessica Weinhold. A senior, Ms. Weinhold has for four years worked on Calvin's "Phone-a-thon," a fundraising program (annual goal: \$1 million) in which students telephone alumni to solicit financial support for the college. A Phone-a-Thon supervisor this year, Ms. Weinhold said Calvin is losing donors as more learn, for example, that Calvin is much more liberal than they are on issues such as homosexuality and theistic evolution.

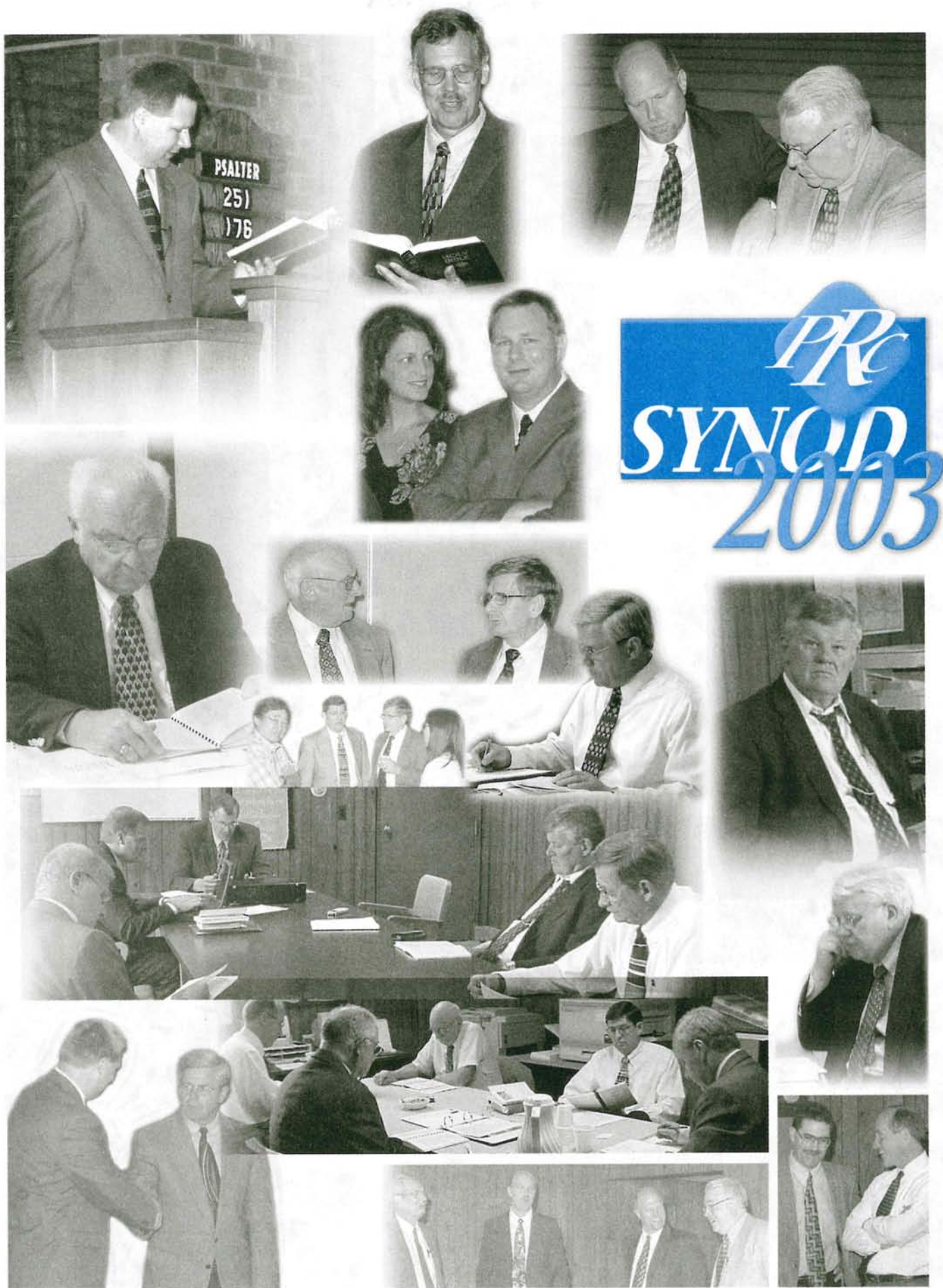
"If donors knew they were teaching feminist theology here, all hell would break loose," Ms. Weinhold said....

## ■ As quoted in *Reader's Digest*

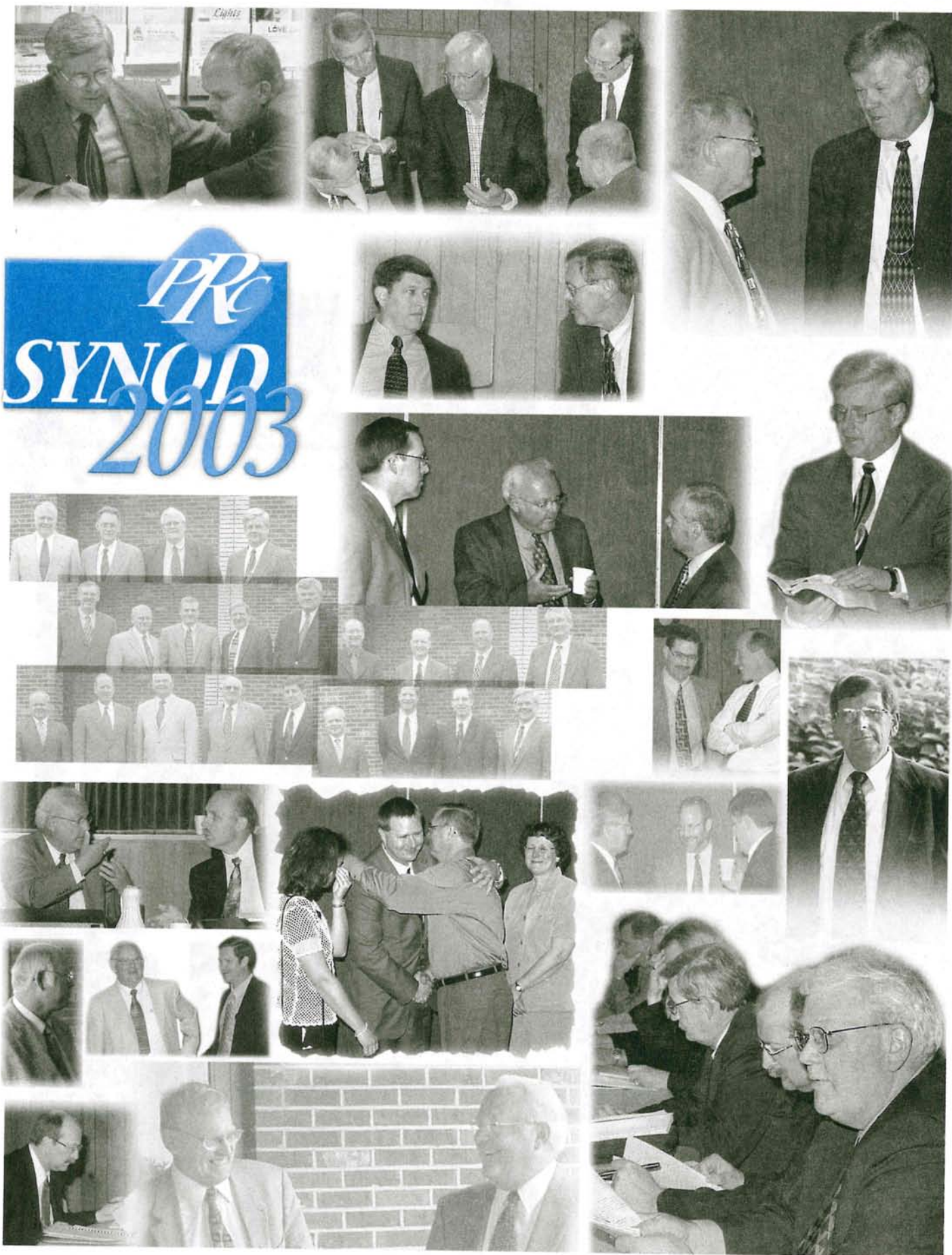
...overheard

We learn how to kiss, or to drink, talk to our buddies—all the things that you can't really teach in social studies or history—we learn them at the movies. (Jack Nicholson in the *Los Angeles Times*)

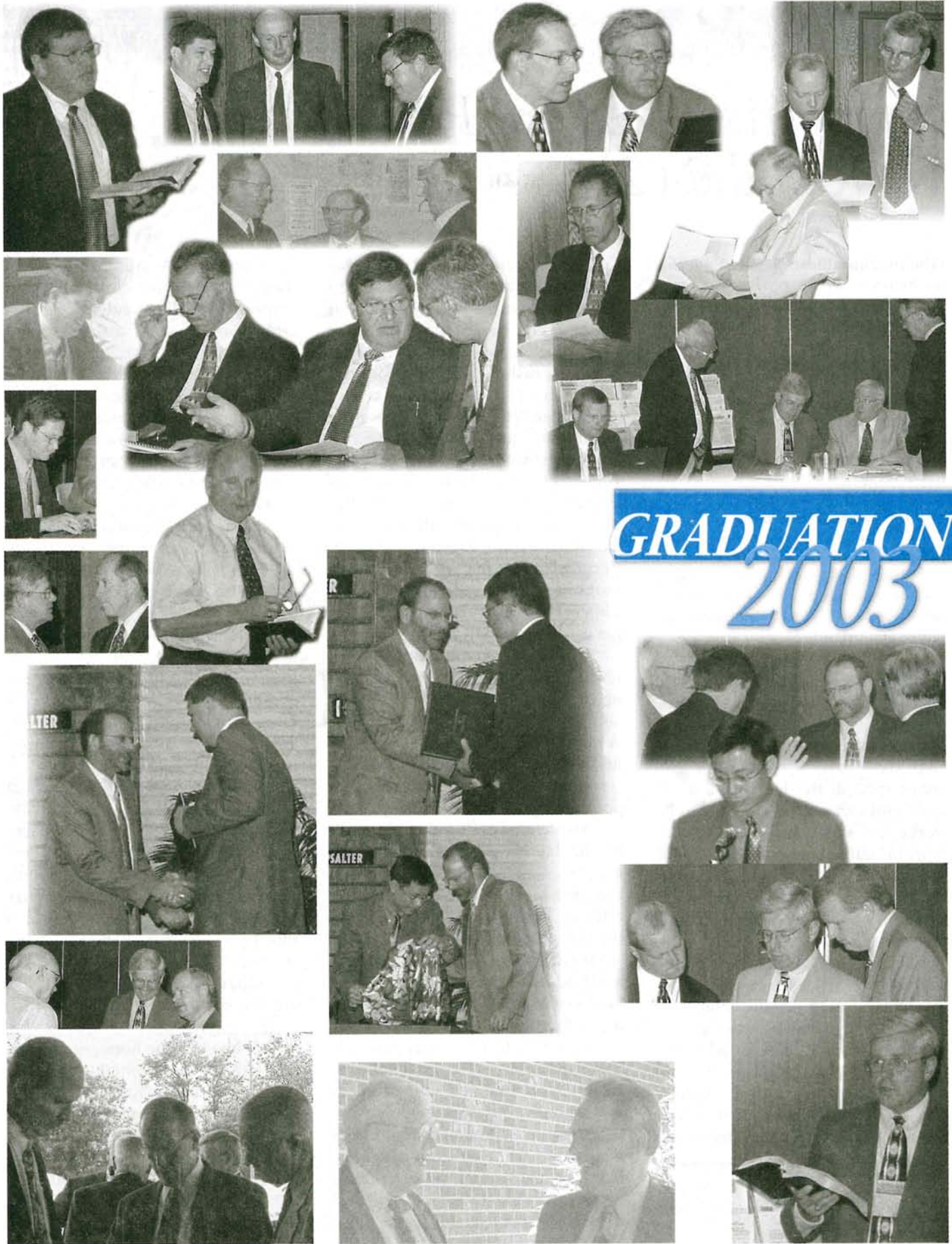
How true!! We learn these things not only from movies in the theatre, but on television and on our videos and CDs. We learn even more than the above. We learn how to dress—with bare midriffs, multiple body piercings (increasingly like the Hottentots of deepest Africa), hairstyles, etc. We can learn there from the actors and actresses, from the famous in the realm of sports. The standards for "beauty" are established there. But the truths of Scripture are not honored and, in fact, are openly denied. ☹











# GRADUATION 2003



# Humanism and the PR Teacher: No R and R (2)

[The first installment pointed out that humanism is the philosophy that makes man the measure of all things. Some of the significant concomitant elements of that basic dictum include:

1. A denial of God as He has revealed Himself in Scripture. Depending on the emphasis of the particular humanist movement, the substitute god is man himself, or perhaps society, or culture, or science, and such like objects.
2. Earth-centeredness.
3. The liberty of man.
4. The striving for unity and peace, or a man-centered kingdom.

Humanists paid lip service to a God of some kind until evolution was developed. All forms of humanism espouse evolution.]

**H**umanism is at war with Christian school teachers. These teachers dedicate their lives to assist parents in the God-given task of raising the covenant seed in the fear of God. If the Devil can make teachers be the purveyors of this anti-God philosophy, he will have won a huge advantage in his war with the covenant seed. Teachers must be aware that they are engaged in a constant war.

Humanism is the prevailing philosophy, or, even, religion, in the world today. Its influence *will* be felt. In fact, it is pervasive.

Humanism is manifested in the advertising that emphasizes freedom. The freedom of man is glorified in the rebellious spirit. Consider the automobile advertisements

that ridicule rules and advance vehicles that allow the drivers to “go out of the lines.” A commercial pushing deodorant uses a skateboarder doing his own thing, even if he is trashing public property. Man is free to do as he pleases.

Advertisers promote humanistic pleasure and encourage you to do your own thing using sexually suggestive ads. The totally earthy-mindedness of humanism is displayed in the glorification of parties that display attractive, happy people drinking, dancing, and laughing. The message is clear: This is the life to enjoy; it does not get any better than this.

Colleges promote themselves using humanistic themes — you need to make your own world, pursue your dreams. Obviously there is no hint that one ought to seek to know the vocation that God has determined. No, you choose your path, and go for it.

The hero worship that abounds in our day is rank humanism. It is a setting up of the individual as the standard. The rock star, the athlete, the financial guru, the actor and actress. These people then set the standards for dress, speech, attitude, Sabbath activity, etc. Not God’s standards, but man’s are to be imitated.

Teachers face the real possibility of influences of humanism concretely, and that not first of all in the student, but in themselves — in the speech, attitude, and dress of teachers. For an example, I notice that teachers of the old school wore (and still do wear) suits and dresses almost exclusively in class.

This was not because they imagined that dressier clothes earned respect. But they understood that clothes do suggest attitudes, and indicate the importance of the work and the position. Christian school teachers have long recognized the importance of the work and the high calling, and thus went out and bought clothes appropriate for the work — even when salaries were smaller than today’s.

Suits, even ties, and dresses are no longer the norm in many schools. Teachers are dressing more and more casually. I wonder, why the change? What influenced teachers to dress more casually? I do not accuse teachers of humanism because they dress casually. I only pose the question for your consideration as teachers. What is your standard for dressing, and who is setting it?

Teachers face the influence of humanism in the area of authority. Humanism pushes personal freedom, even rebellion against authority that restricts personal freedom. Teachers ought to face this squarely. Attitudes towards authority — has this changed among teachers? Is the administrator only a facilitator, or an authority? And are the parents the real authority, or an interference? And is the school board to be honored and respected, or complained about? It is easy to be influenced by the spirit of humanism because our flesh naturally loves it.

Teachers need to face possible effects of humanism as revealed in our speech. What is the content of our speech outside the classroom?

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Is it the same as the conversations of the world? Cars, money, clothes, money, politics, money, and entertainment? Or are our conversations filled predominantly with spiritual things? What is influencing our speech?

Let it be clear that by bringing these things up, I make no accusations. I call matters to the attention of teachers in order that teachers may face these things themselves. You as teachers judge yourselves, as all believers must.

And if we as parents and teachers often discover that humanism has influenced our thinking and our speech, obviously, the students are affected far more. The rock and country music of the world relentlessly pushes the themes of rebellion, sex, and drugs. The unmistakable message pounded into the souls of covenant youth who listen to this music is this: There are no standards of right or wrong.

Advertising likewise is geared to catch the youth. It seeks to mold their thinking, stimulate their desires, and set their goals. The youth have a much harder time resisting the pressure of peers when it seems that virtually every one of their peers is in lockstep, and that, with the lifestyle portrayed in the advertisements.

Today's western culture is a humanist's paradise. Man has become the standard. If man can produce it, it is called legitimate art. No matter that it is perverse, blasphemous, demeaning, or all of the above.

Also in music, man-as-the-standard means that anything goes. There are the obvious moral evils of rock and country music, in its various forms. Humanism's influence is also found in religious music. Through the centuries, the church has encountered the ever-present danger of man-centered hymns. Now we are confronted with the additional danger of music that imitates godless rock music while adding some (ostensibly) religious content to the words. Man sets the standards of what is

acceptable praise to God.

Drama continues to press its pernicious humanism upon us. Too many students, I fear, (and, of course, one is too many) come to school with their heads filled with last night's movies and sit-coms, which is to say, the violence, the filth, as well as the authority-ridiculing jokes of the ungodly. I pray God that teachers do not imbibe this deadly spiritual poison. I pray that rather you do recognize the wickedness it contains, and that it is one of the most powerful tools ever invented by man to exert influence. We must not allow these evils to enter into our minds in the semi-hypnotic state that comes upon television viewers. Nor may we allow drama to be condoned in the classroom or halls of the Christian school.

We face new battlefields with the coming of computers into many homes. The more powerful the tool, the greater the capacity for evil in the war. The computer gives the youth access to video games, which not only waste time, but shape attitudes. The main themes of the popular games are violence, vengeance, and victory — victory at any cost, for my self-actualization. And that does not touch the access into the cesspools of iniquity on the Internet.

In the wars in culture, feminism arises as a major foe. Feminism preaches the ability and freedom of women, and insists that the standards of Scripture have no bearing on what women can or may do. I still recall the old popular song of my teenage years in which a popular female singer belted out, "I am woman, I can do anything!"

The humanist mainstay of freedom has won many triumphs in our culture in the area of sex. The result is acceptable promiscuity, homosexuality, abortions, and easy divorces. And these ravage the youth that are caught in these situations, either by their own sins, or the sins of their parents. The effect can be simply devastating from every point of view.

In the war against humanism, cultural influences are some of the most powerful and deadly forces that teachers face.

But teachers face this influence in other ways. Consider the classroom material, for instance. In a third grade English textbook, one can find a set of sentences in which students must correct the capitalization, or perhaps find the subject and verb. Innocent enough until, upon careful reading, one discovers that the individual sentences — taken together — form a cohesive lesson on some humanistic theme: the environment, social injustice, feminism, or some such topic.

Teachers are always looking for new and better resources — whether purchased, rented, or drawn from the Internet. Teachers must not allow themselves to become callous. The perspective must be identified. It will rarely be Christian, and even more rarely a Reformed world and life view. Almost certainly, it is man-centered. Teachers must not be hesitant about calling the bias to the attention of students and pointing out the error. Use the opportunity to give instruction on the subtle influences of humanism.

Perhaps the most deadly foe in the battle is what may loosely be called "Christian humanism." This movement sees the value of man to be that everyone is supposedly created in the image of God. Reformed Christians can get caught up in this thinking, even though the Bible and the Reformed confessions teach that the image of God was lost in the fall. This leads to a certain affinity between the believer and the unbeliever, and the opportunity for the believer to join hands with the unbeliever for the cause of humanity. The social calling of this humanism is the obligation to *do* something in this creation and in society to improve both.

Concretely, teachers, if you obtained your college degree from Grand Valley State U, Western Michigan U, or any other secular



college, you heard the message that man can shape his own destiny. So, get out and make the world a better place. If you attended Dordt, Calvin, Trinity, or any other Christian college, you heard that you *can* do something for Christ, you *can* make a difference in this world, and you *must* make a difference in this world.

Hearing that message, woven into nearly all classes, for four years, will have some effect. Teachers must face the question, How much of this influence remains in me after I graduate? Do I feel guilty that our school is not active in social causes? Am I slightly embarrassed when old college friends ask, "What is *your school* doing?" and I know that he refers to social activities? This movement may sound very pious and pressure the Christian school to do its "Christian duty," but it is humanism for all that. The cry is: "Christ has redeemed the world, and now it is up to *you* to make the whole creation subservient to Christ. We must save the world. Christ will come after our mission is accomplished."

The influence of humanism is


not limited to the world about us. It encroaches on the church's doctrine and life as well. Humanism is at the heart of all forms of Arminianism — the teaching that man can save himself, or that man's efforts are a necessary contribution to his own salvation. Humanism is expressed in all perfectionism thinking — I can achieve perfection. All the tolerance movements in the church world are basically humanism. Erasmus, the great Dutch humanist, combined all of these. He strove for peace among the various factions of the church, despised wrangling over points of doctrine, and trumpeted the free will of man.

Humanism's influence in the ecumenical movements today is very deep. It produces the sentiment that we must have tolerance and peace at all costs. The various churches in the Reformed camp must unite by every means, it is widely and noisily affirmed. This hits close to home. When the Protestant Reformed Churches and United Reformed Churches break off talks because the PRC refuse to compromise on doctrine and tolerate a conditional covenant, the PRC are condemned by

many as a bunch of proud and intolerant folk who maintain doctrine at the expense of the unity.

These movements and attitudes press upon Reformed, Christian teachers. By nature, we do not like to be different or to be rejected by others. Students do not like to be different, especially those in junior high and high school.

Teachers, being redeemed sinners drawn out of this world by grace, are still naturally open to humanism. And their students, hardly having begun the major battles, are not conscious of the dangers involved or the consequences of giving in. Thus, the urgent necessity for teachers to be fighting — consciously. The war against humanism is constant, and the battle is fierce.

Christian school teachers may feel at times overwhelmed by the enormity of the battle and relentlessness of the enemy. They should not. God has not deserted these warriors or left them to fight on their own. Nor has He left them unarmed. Teachers have powerful and effectual weapons at their disposal. Next time: The arsenal. 

Marking the Bulwarks of Zion

Prof. Herman Hanko

# Jacobus Arminius and Arminianism (1)

## Introduction

**I**n writing on the subject of the life and teachings of Arminius, we turn to a heresy with which most, if not all, the readers of the *Standard Bearer* are familiar. The Arminian controversy took place in what is the fa-

therland of many of us; and the glorious triumph of Dordt is part of our own heritage as Reformed churches.

The Protestant Reformed Churches are by no means the only denomination that traces its spiritual lineage to the Synod of Dordt and that counts the Canons of Dordt as part of its creedal heritage. Many Reformed churches around the world do the same. Yet, if one would survey the ecclesiastical scene today, one would almost be

driven to the conclusion that, though Dordt was a great victory in the battle of faith, Arminius the heretic won after all. Dordt won a battle; Arminius won the war.

One must not, however, look at the whole matter from a purely earthly viewpoint. The truth of it all does not lie open before our eyes. But faith, which is the substance of things not seen, confesses that God always preserves His church and the truth of His sovereign and particular grace.

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Even though the material is familiar to many of us, it is good to study it all again.



The Reformation came to the Netherlands very soon after it began in Germany and Switzerland.

The Netherlands was part of a larger area known as "the Lowlands," and comprising what is now the Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxembourg. The entire area was under the rule of the emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, who was, at the time of the Reformation in the Lowlands, a Spaniard named Charles V. The Lowlands were permitted a great deal of independence, to which they had become accustomed. In this country a strong mercantile and seafaring class had developed and the Lowlands were more prosperous than any other country in continental Europe.



The Lutheran Reformation had been the first reformatory influence in the land, and the first martyrs of the Reformation were two men of Lutheran conviction who were burned at the stake, in memory of whose martyrdom Luther had written a hymn. But Calvinism had quickly followed, and Lutheranism all but disappeared.

A strong Reformed church had been established in the Lowlands, which held its first synod in 1571 in Emden, outside the borders of the Lowlands in Germany. This was necessary because Charles V, a Spaniard, was determined to drive the Reformation from the Lowlands. He began a period of persecution during which people suffered horribly and many of the Reformed faith were killed.

Subsequent synods had been held in Middleburg and Dordrecht, at which synods a church order had gradually been formulated and the Heidelberg Catechism and the Confession of Faith had been adopted as the confessional basis.

The church was, however, a

state church — the same as in almost every other country in Europe. The result was that many in the church were not genuinely Reformed. Among these were several important leaders. Caspar Coolhaes was disciplined for teaching the free will of man and a general atonement of Christ. Dirk Coornhert was a humanist who opposed predestination. He had many supporters both in and out of government. John van Oldenbarneveld, the head of the government, favored a policy of religious and doctrinal freedom, which, in practice, meant that heretics were tolerated in the church.

Into this situation Jacob Harmsen, later to be known as Jacobus Arminius, was born and educated.

#### **Arminius' Education**

Arminius was born in Oudewater in 1560. His parents had been killed by the Spaniards and his education was supported by a guild in Amsterdam. He studied at the University of Leyden from 1575-1582. That university had been a gift from the government of the Netherlands to the city for its heroic resistance during the Spanish siege some years earlier.

At 22 years of age Arminius went to Geneva, sent there by the guild, to study under Beza. He was in this city for five years, heard Beza lecture on the book of Romans, and learned the system which is now called Calvinism. There is some evidence that he was already in trouble for his views and conduct in Geneva. Samuel Miller claims that already in these years Arminius began to disagree with the teachings of the Genevan reformers, particularly on the doctrine of predestination, and that he began to meet secretly with fellow students to propagate his views. In fact, it is possible that he was expelled by the Academy for his conduct.

Strange as it may seem, Arminius went from Geneva to Italy, where he visited Padua and

Rome. No one seems to know why he went to the stronghold of Roman Catholicism, and what he did while there; but it certainly was strange conduct for one supposedly committed to the Reformation.

#### **Arminius' Ministry in Leyden**

In 1587 Arminius returned to the Netherlands and, after licensure, was ordained minister of the church in Amsterdam. His colleague was Plancius, a staunch defender of the Reformed faith. It was not long before Arminius was in trouble for his views. Strangely (though perhaps deliberately), Arminius began a series of sermons on the book of Romans. In his exposition of Romans 7:14ff. he said that Paul was speaking of himself here in his unconverted state. The implication of this was, of course, that Paul, prior to his regeneration and conversion, could will to do the good. When Arminius came to Romans 9 he proved to be no better. He openly denied reprobation.

At about this same time Dirk Coornhert also attacked the doctrine of predestination, and Arminius was asked to write a refutation of Coornhert's error. Apparently the request came to him because his views were not widely known and his reputation for learning was recognized throughout the churches. Arminius never wrote this refutation, although he never informed anyone either that he did not intend to write it.

#### **Arminius as Professor of Theology**

Trouble was brewing in Amsterdam, and Plancius was the leader of the opposition. But while the controversy was going on, Arminius received the appointment to the chair of theology at the University of Leyden, his alma mater. Arminius was actually second choice for the position. The appointment had originally been given to Vorstius, a German theologian of note. Vorstius was, however, a known Socinian, who de-



nied the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ. His appointment can be explained only by remembering that the universities were under the control of the government and the government was, generally speaking, opposed to the Reformed faith. The opposition to Vorstius was fierce. Perhaps the one point that changed the minds of the government officials and the curators in the school was a letter from James I in England. Although James himself was not in any sense interested in true religion, he had counselors who were, and England was an ally of the Netherlands in the war against Spain. At any rate, James objected to the appointment of Vorstius, and the government, concerned about keeping England as an ally, revoked the appointment and gave it instead to Arminius.

To the appointment of Arminius both Plancius and Gomarus objected, but they were overruled, and Arminius was installed. His installation, however, came only after he had assured the curators of the soundness of his views and had promised to abide by the creeds.

Perhaps the time has come to say a word about Gomarus. Details concerning the life of this remarkable man can be found in my book, *Portraits of Faithful Saints*.

Franciscus Gomarus was born in Bruges (what is now Belgium) in 1563. He was a refugee from the Palatinate who studied in Strassburg, Oxford, Cambridge, and Heidelberg. In 1587 he became minister of the Reformed Church in Frankfurt, and in 1594 he was appointed to be theological professor in Leyden. He opposed the teachings of Arminius vigorously, attended the Synod of Dordt, and finally resigned from his post in Leyden and served as pastor of the church in Middleburg until his death in 1641. He may surely be called Arminius' chief enemy.

Although Arminius had sealed his appointment with a promise not to propagate his views, this was a lie. Although he refrained from

teaching his views in the classroom to keep them from becoming public, he taught them in private meetings in his home with select students whom he knew to be sympathetic to his position. These men were the future ministers in the Reformed churches, and the result was that the churches were filled with disciples of Arminius.

#### Arminius' Character

Within the university and throughout the churches, controversy was increasing, and disputes over the teachings of Arminius were threatening the unity of the church. Although conferences were called and pleas for a national synod to settle the matter were made to the authorities, no progress was made, chiefly because the government authorities, alone empowered to call a synod, were sympathetic to Arminius and favored toleration of dissenting views.

In the midst of it all, Arminius died. The date was October 19, 1609.

Arminius was everything Gomarus was not. Gomarus was outspoken, tactless, blunt to a fault, with no patience for the subtleties of those introducing into the church false doctrine, but profoundly committed to the Reformed faith. Arminius was of a meek and quiet spirit. He was an able scholar, well-educated, refined in manners and appearance. He was an effective instructor and capable of gaining a loyal and devoted following. Yet, he was something of a superficial thinker and lacked the depth of thought of his opponent Gomarus. He was a charismatic man to whom people were easily attracted, and he was noted for his camaraderie, especially with his students.

Nevertheless, all these favorable traits mean nothing in the light of his dishonesty. He was not a man of integrity. He knew that he was teaching ideas contrary to the Reformed faith. He knew that his views were contrary to the adopted confessions of the church. In spite

of this, he attempted to introduce his views in secret and unethical ways. He clothed his views in seemingly Reformed terminology so as to deceive people. He taught his views in secret, even when he had promised not to do this. He lied without compunction, and was not afraid, hypocritically, to call on the name of God in defense of his abhorrent actions.

In short, he was what heretics frequently are. Rarely do heretics openly and boldly state their views within the church. One could wish that it were different. I often wonder why a man who deep down inside himself does not want the truth which a particular church confesses nevertheless refuses to state openly and frankly his disagreements with the doctrines of the church. Upon ordination he promises to do this very thing when he signs the Formula of Subscription. But he prefers to break his vow. Always insisting that he is in agreement with the doctrine of the church, he nevertheless teaches false doctrine in subtle and devious ways. In this way, he gains a following in the church, causes the church to be troubled no end by his heresies, and complains of injustice when he is condemned.

How much more honorable it would be for a minister, having come to the conclusion that the church was wrong in some part of its confession, to bring his views to the assemblies, have them judged by his peers, and abide by the decisions of his colleagues. If he was persuaded that his views were, after all, wrong, well and good. If he was still convinced that he was right and the churches wrong, he could and should, without rancor, leave that denomination to join a church more in keeping with his views.


There are, I think, especially two reasons why a man rarely does this. The first reason has to do with his own sinful nature. Heresy arises out of pride, intellectual pride more than anything else. In

his pride a heretic does not want to admit his wrong, but wishes instead to persuade others of his position and gain a following of people sympathetic to him. A following enables him to justify his own error.

The second reason is that heresy has its origin in Satan's evil

plots to destroy the church. Satan knows better than anyone that the way to destroy the church of Christ is to rob the church of her confession of the truth. A church without the truth is a "synagogue of Satan." But deceit is the order of the day if the ultimate goal is the destruction of the cause of Christ.

Many must be persuaded that the lie is truth, that black is white, that error is confessional, and that wrong can be justified. Such persuasion requires deceitful tactics and a shameless lack of integrity.

So it was with Arminius. And so it has been in the history of the church. 

## Book Reviews



*Understanding Muslim Teachings and Traditions: A Guide for Christians*, by Phil Parshall, Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2002. Pp. 240. \$14.99 (paper). [Reviewed by Prof. Robert D. Decker.]


The reader who wishes to read a more detailed summary of Islam's founder, teachings, and practice than this reviewer's chapter on Islam in his syllabus on World Religions could probably not do any better than to read this book. It is well written and an accurate summary of Islam.

The author has graduate degrees from Wheaton Graduate School, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, and Fuller Seminary, and fellowships with Harvard and Yale Universities. He has written several books on Islam. His knowledge

of Islam does not come merely from his academic pursuits. Parshall has served as a missionary in Muslim nations for forty years. He knows whereof he writes from firsthand missionary experience.

The author documents his conclusions with numerous quotations from the two most important original sources: the *Quran* and the *Hadith*. The *Quran* is Islam's "Bible"; the *Hadith* is "the written collection of Traditions about what the Prophet said or did, or how he reacted to others. The Traditions were first transmitted by word of mouth" (226). The bibliography (12 volumes), however, is quite brief for study of this nature and length. Parshall does include a glossary of terms and an index. Both of these are detailed and helpful to the reader.

Included among the twenty-one chapters are such subjects as: the *Quran*, Salvation Muhammad, Pilgrimage, Jihad and Violence, Jesus, Women, Muhammad's Wives, Legalisms, Punishments for Sin, Hell, and Paradise. We might add, regarding Muhammad's wives, that he had twelve, and that he "had female captives in addition to his twelve wives. As sexual rights came with the possession of the captives, it is assumed that the Prophet accepted these physical privileges" (p. 182). It is telling to note Parshall's comment, "I have had Muslims express to me their disappointment that Jesus was not married and therefore did not experience all of life's cycles as did Muhammad" p. 182).

In addition to the above, the book, in the light of 9-11-'01, is timely. 

## Graduates



**Paul Goh**

Age: 42

Wife's Name: Ng Suet Yin

Membership: Evangelical Reformed Churches in Singapore

Internship: Bethel PRC, Roselle, IL

College: Theological Centre for Asia

Contact:

536 Hougang Street 52, #09-104  
Singapore 530536, Republic of Singapore

Wife's Name: Karen

Children: Jared, Justin, Katrina, Jason, Dorothy, Stephan

Membership: Hope PRC, Walker, MI

Internship: Southeast PRC,  
Grand Rapids, MI

College: Grand Valley State University

Contact:

1508 Ferndale Ave. SW  
Grand Rapids, MI 49544  
(616) 532-0624



**William Langerak**

Age: 37

July 2003/Standard Bearer/429




## Report of Classis East

**C**lassis East met in regular session on Wednesday, May 14, 2003 at the Grace PRC. All the churches were represented by two delegates. Rev. Dick served as chairman for this session. Students in the church history

classes at Covenant Christian High School were observers of the meeting.

Classis' business was routine and short. Classical appointments were granted to Byron Center, Faith, and Southeast. Expenses for this classis amounted to \$780.00.

Classis will meet next on Wednesday, September 10, 2003 at the Byron Center PRC.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jon J. Huisken,  
Stated Clerk 

## News From Our Churches

Mr. Benjamin Wigger

### Minister Activities

**W**e extend our congratulations to Rev. & Mrs. Allen Brummel on the occasion of the birth of a son, Darren Ray, born May 28. Darren weighed in at eight pounds fifteen ounces and joins a busy household including five brothers and one sister.

Rev. Michael DeVries declined the call he had been considering to serve as the next pastor of the Byron Center, MI PRC. Byron then called Rev. Wilbur Bruinsma, out of a trio that included also Rev. Dick, and Rev. Slopsema.

After Rev. Charles Terpstra declined the call that came to him from the Faith PRC in Jenison, MI, Faith formed a new trio consisting of Rev. Wilbur Bruinsma, Rev. James Slopsema, and Rev. Ronald VanOverloop. Rev. Slopsema was elected to receive the call.

Rev. VanOverloop declined the call he received from Southeast PRC in Grand Rapids, MI. Southeast's new trio is Candidate William Langerak, Rev. James Slopsema, and Rev. Richard Smit.

The Hull, IA PRC, our denomination's calling church for the mission work in Ghana, formed a new trio for calling a second missionary to that West African country: Rev. Barrett Gritters, Rev. James Laning, and Rev. Charles Terpstra. Rev. Terpstra was elected.

Our churches' Theological School Committee presented to

Synod 2003 the names of Revs. Ronald Cammenga, Barrett Gritters, and Steven Key as their recommended nominations for the call to the seminary, eventually replacing retiring Professor Robert Decker in the department of Practical Theology and New Testament Studies. Unlike a trio presented by a council to a congregation, synod has the right to change this list. Synod, however, approved the list, and out of it elected Rev. Gritters to receive the call, and Rev. Cammenga as an alternate, should Rev. Gritters be led to decline.

### Mission Activities

**I**n missionary furlough news, we found that three of our denomination's missionaries, Rev. Wayne Bekkering (Ghana), Rev. Arie denHartog (Singapore), and Rev. Audred Spriensma (the Philippines) were all on furlough during the month of June. Obviously they all spent welcome time with their families and with their calling consistories and churches. They also hoped to visit synod when their fields of labor were being discussed.

The Covenant PRC in Wyckoff, N.J., along with Rev. Jaikishin Mahtani, our churches' missionary to Pittsburgh, PA, have jointly decided to continue cooperative labors in the developing work in Allentown, PA. At this early stage, the detailed plans have yet to be approved by the Southwest PRC in Grandville, MI, the calling church for eastern home missions, and our churches' Domestic Mission Committee.

### Young Adult Activities

**T**he congregation of Covenant PRC in Wyckoff, NJ is not only becoming busy with the work in Allentown, but their young adults just finished hosting a Spring Retreat May 24-30. I thank Laura Genovese for providing you and me with the following information about that retreat.

The Young Adults Retreat was held at Spruce Lake in the Pocano Mountains of Pennsylvania. Rev. Ronald Cammenga gave the first speech on "Learning What to Pray from the Psalms," and Rev. Carl Haak gave the second speech on "Learning How to Pray — Right Attitude." Rev. David Overway, pastor at Covenant, was also in attendance. There were 54 young adults who attended this year's retreat. They spent two days touring New York City. Other activities at Spruce Lake included a challenge course, a volleyball tournament, organized team games, a hymn sing, hiking, and a bonfire. The retreat formally concluded with the Ascension Day service, but many young adults stayed through Friday and Saturday to continue touring the area. The young adults had a wonderful time and Covenant is already looking forward to the next retreat, which they hope, the Lord willing, to host in two more years.

### Young People's Activities

**A** special word of thanks is in order for the Sr. Young People of the Faith PRC in Jenison, MI for hosting their 4<sup>th</sup> annual Special Needs Program. What a beau-

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



tiful and God-glorifying evening. Be assured that your efforts are greatly appreciated. The last verse of "Beatitudes of Friendship" from your program says it best: "You assure the struggling, the peculiar, and the unique that their God-given self is what makes them beautiful."

### Denomination Activities

**T**he Ladies of the Edgerton, MN PRC invited the ladies from the Doon and Hull, IA PRCs to join them for the Spring Ladies League Meeting in late April. Rev. Daniel Kleyn, pastor at Edgerton, spoke from II Timothy 1:5 concerning Lois and Eunice, Timothy's grand-

mother and mother.

First PRC of Holland, MI was the site of this year's Sunday School Teachers Mass Meeting. This meeting was held May 15, and Don and Judi Doezeema gave a slide-presentation on the Holy Land.


### Congregation Activities

**M**embers of the Doon, IA PRC, the calling church for Rev. and Mrs. Spriensma and their work in the Philippines, sent a care package to their son, SPC Andrew Spriensma, who is currently serving in the Persian Gulf area. A note of encouragement to Andrew was also suggested.

The choir of the Bethel PRC in Roselle, IL presented a program for their congregation on May 18.

The council of Bethel approved the recommendation of the Building Committee to remodel the first floor of their parsonage.

### School Activities

**T**he Eastside Christian School Promoters, in Grand Rapids, MI, sponsored a lecture at First PRC on May 15 on the topic, "How Did We Get the New Testament?" The speaker, Dr. Theodore P. Letis, defended the Authorized Version (KJV). Dr. Letis is director of the Institute for Renaissance and Reformation Studies. 

## Announcements

### NOTICE!!!

With gratitude to God for preserving us in and through the schism of 1953, several of our area evangelism committees are planning two lectures: the first, by Prof. Russell Dykstra on the history and significance of that event, and the second, a Reformation Day lecture on the doctrinal issue. The lectures will be at Grace Community Church, 3500 New Holland Rd., on October 30 and 31 at 7:30 P.M. Please join us in thanksgiving and remembrance on those two evenings.

### WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

With praise and gratitude to our covenant God, we announce the 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents,

### CORNELIUS and FRANCES DOEZEMA,

on July 21, 2003. We thank God for the godly guidance and Christian love they have shown us. We pray the Lord will bless them in the years ahead.

"One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts" (Psalm 145:4).

- ✳ Steven and Neva Feenstra
- ✳ Robert and Debra Doezeema
- ✳ Roger and Anne Veldman
- ✳ Henry and Dorothy DeJong
- ✳ Glenn and Beth Feenstra
- ✳ Charles and Heidi Doezeema
- ✳ Timothy and Joan Kaiser

46 grandchildren

1 great-grandchild

Holland, Michigan

### HELP!!!!

The Book and Publications subcommittee of the Reformed Free Publishing Association is collecting material with a view to the possible publication of a book on the prophecy of Isaiah based on the sermons of the late Prof. H. C. Hoeksema.

We have in hand all written materials, and now have recordings of about 65% of the sermons that Prof. Hoeksema preached on Isaiah, thanks to the help of our readers. We are still seeking to obtain as many of the missing recordings as possible, as well as copies of tapes we already have, some of which are incomplete. The majority of these sermons were preached from about 1970 through 1988, primarily, though not exclusively in the Grand Rapids area.

We are again asking *all* consistories, tape committees, and individuals to check files and tape libraries for any sermons by HCH on the texts listed below. Even if you have other of HCH's Isaiah sermons not included in this list, please inform us. We ask that *everyone* who reads this notice take a moment to check tape collections or to contact someone who might have recordings of these sermons. *Nothing* is insignificant, and your help is crucial to this project.

Below is a list of the texts in Isaiah for which we are still seeking recordings.

2:4, 2:5, 2:22, 3:10-11, 8:18, 9:6, 11:6-9, 12:1, 17:12-14, 21:11-12, 22:22, 26:20-21, 27:6, 28:16, 29:13-14, 30:26, 32:1-2, 33:22, 34:2-5 & 8-11, 35:3-6 & 10, 37, 16-20, 38:1-8, 43:4, 48:20-22, 49:5, 49:21-23, 49:24-25, 52:7, 52:14-15, 53:3, 53:10, 54:9-10, 55:11, 57:19-21, 58:5-9, 59:12-15, 59:21, 60:1-3, 62:4-5, 63:8-9, 63:17, 64:4, 64:6, 64:8, 65:1, 65:2, 65:8-9, 66:1-2, 66:11.

If you have any of these (or other) of HCH's Isaiah sermons on tape, please contact us immediately. If you can send us a duplicate tape, please do so. If you cannot, please send us your original tapes. We will duplicate them and return the original to you. Please contact:

Evelyn Langerak  
% RFPA  
4949 Ivanrest Ave.  
Grandville, MI 49418-9709  
(616) 224-1518  
mail@rfpa.org

Mark Hoeksema  
6727 Dale Ave.  
Hudsonville, MI 49426  
(616) 669-9358  
hoeksema@iserv.net

Thank you for any help you can give us!

—RFPA Book and Publications Committee



## RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The consistory and congregation of Loveland PRC extend their Christian sympathy to Mrs. Luella Griess, her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren in the death of

### MR. GIB GRIESS.

Psalm 116:15, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints."

Rev. Eriks, President

## NOTICE!

Classis West of the Protestant Reformed Churches will convene, the Lord willing, in the South Holland Protestant Reformed Church in South Holland, Illinois on Wednesday, September 3, 2003 at 8:30 A.M. All material for the agenda should be in the hands of the stated clerk by Monday, August 4, 2003. An officebearers' conference is being planned for Tuesday, September 2. Delegates or visitors in need of lodging and/or transportation should notify the clerk of South Holland, Mr. George DeJong, 18320 Stony Island Ave., Lansing, IL 60438. Phone: (708) 895-4967. Email: buyspinach@aol.com

Rev. Daniel Kleyn, Stated Clerk

## WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

Our parents,

**KENNETH and DOROTHY VINK**, celebrated their 40<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary on June 13, 2003. Their children and grandchildren thank them for the many sacrifices that they made in order for us to have a Christian upbringing. May the Lord continue to bless their marriage.

"Thy mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens; and thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds. How excellent is thy lovingkindness, O God! Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings" (Psalm 36:5, 7).

✿ Kevin and Arlys Vink

Monica, Travis, Mitchell

✿ Brian and Karen Kuiper

Ross, Claire

✿ Paul and Elizabeth Vink

Nichole, Catherine, Nelson, Jordan

✿ Dale and Vickie Vink

Taylor, Emily, Joshua

Jenison, Michigan

## NOTICE!!

Classis East will meet in regular session on Wednesday, September 10, 2003 at the Byron Center Protestant Reformed Church, Byron Center, Michigan. Material for this session must be in the hands of the stated clerk no later than August 11, 2003.

Jon J. Huisken  
Stated Clerk

## Reformed Witness Hour

### Station Listings

Station	Location	Frequency	Time/day
KARI.....	Blaine, WA .....	550AM.....	8:00 P.M./Sunday
KLOH.....	Pipestone, MN .....	1050AM.....	8:00 A.M./Sunday
KDCR.....	Sioux Center, IA .....	88.5FM .....	5:30 P.M./Sunday
KCWN.....	Pella, IA .....	99.9FM .....	3:30 P.M./Sunday
WMRH.....	Waupun, WI .....	1170AM.....	8:30 A.M./Sunday
WFUR.....	Grand Rapids, MI .....	102.9FM .....	8:00 A.M./Sunday
WFUR.....	Grand Rapids, MI .....	1570AM.....	4:00 P.M./Sunday
WORD.....	Pittsburgh, PA .....	101.5FM .....	10:00 A.M./Sunday
WFNC.....	Fayetteville, NC .....	640AM.....	9:30 A.M./Sunday
WELP.....	Spartanburg, SC .....	1360AM.....	4:00 P.M./Sunday
WFAM.....	Augusta, GA .....	1050AM.....	4:00 P.M./Sunday
WBXR.....	Huntsville, AL .....	1140AM.....	9:00 A.M./Saturday
CJCA.....	Edmonton, AB .....	930AM.....	6:30 P.M./Sunday
KCNW.....	Kansas City, KS .....	1380AM.....	4:30 P.M./Sunday
KLTT.....	Loveland, CO .....	670AM.....	1:30P.M./Sunday

### Topics for July

Date	Topic	Text
July 6	"His Eternal Knowledge of His People"	Psalm 139:13-16
July 13	"His Precious Thoughts"	Psalm 139:17-18
July 20	"Our Hatred of His Enemies"	Psalm 139:19-22
July 27	"Our Prayer for Divine Examination"	Psalm 139:23-24