

# The Standard Bearer

A Reformed semi-monthly magazine

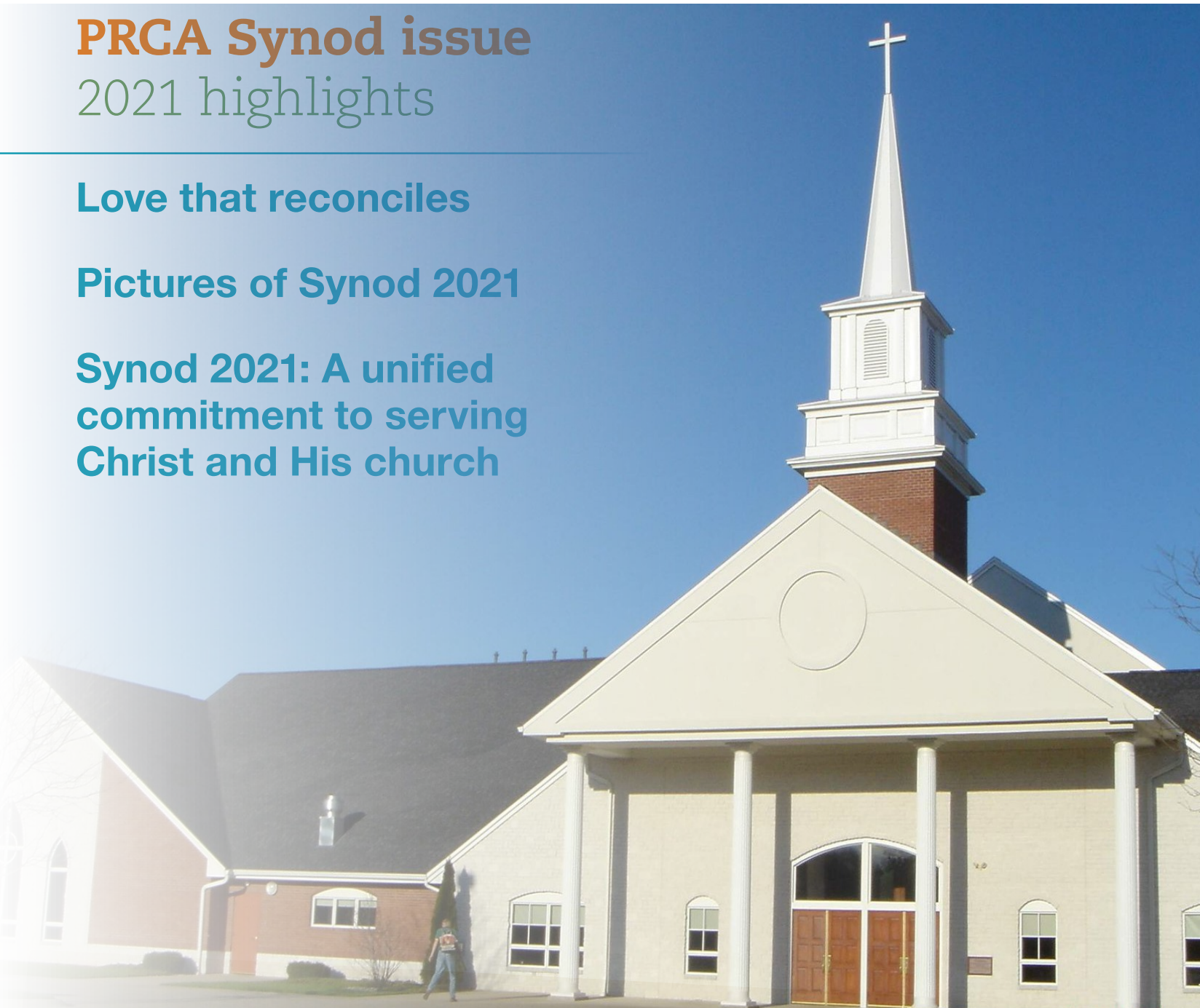
July 2021 • Volume 97 • No. 18

**PRCA Synod issue**  
2021 highlights

**Love that reconciles**

**Pictures of Synod 2021**

**Synod 2021: A unified  
commitment to serving  
Christ and His church**



The *Standard Bearer* (ISSN 0362-4692 [print], 2372-9813 [online]) is a semi-monthly periodical, except monthly during June, July, and August, published by the Reformed Free Publishing Association: 1894 Georgetown Center Dr, Jenison, MI 49428-7137.

#### Postmaster

Send address changes to the *Standard Bearer*, 1894 Georgetown Center Dr, Jenison, MI 49428-7137.

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#### Subscription price

\$30.00 per year in the US, \$42.00 elsewhere  
esubscription: \$20.00  
esubscription free to current hardcopy subscribers.

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Website for RFPA: [www.rfpa.org](http://www.rfpa.org)

Website for PRC: [www.prca.org](http://www.prca.org)

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## Meditation

Jason Kortering (1936-2020) served as a pastor in the Protestant Reformed Churches for 42 years. He also wrote for the *Standard Bearer* for many of those years, including this meditation.\*

# Love that reconciles

Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: But I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire. Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother and then come and offer thy gift. Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily, I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.

Matthew 5:21-26

There is more than one way to kill a person.

Yes, the violent taking of a human life is the most obvious. But Jesus said you can kill with anger that is internalized. You can kill with vicious words like “Raca” or “Fool”!

The end result is the same, a human being is decimated, whether physically or psychologically.

Such action ought to be foreign to the citizens of the kingdom of heaven. Those who are poor in spirit, mourners, meek, hungering after righteousness, merciful, pure in heart, peacemakers have the power to be free from such evil conduct and attitude. That power is love, the law of the kingdom of heaven.

But, are we free from such action?

You have to answer this for yourself.

In dealing with the subject of murder, Jesus had to contend with the Scribes and Pharisees who had powerful influence upon the people of that day. They taught the people that only the deed of murder was forbidden by the law of Moses. They did this on good authority, for they claimed that they had the ‘ancients,’ the men of old time, on their side.

Jesus meets them at the point of controversy, when He says, “Ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time....” These old-timers were the leaders of the people upon the return from captivity in Babylon. During the interval of their absence in a foreign land, the people became influenced by Babylon. They lost the knowledge of their native tongue, Hebrew, and instead became adapted to the Aramaic language. The laws of Moses were written in Hebrew, so the Jews became dependent upon the “scholars,” the Scribes, to speak to them about the law and to explain it to them. Hence Jesus said, “Ye have heard that it was said...”—that is, that oral tradition is.... The situation was much like the time of the Reformation when the people did not have the Bible in their native tongue and they depended upon the church to explain things.

This tradition, taught by the Scribes and put into practice by the Pharisees, was summarized by Jesus this way: “Thou shalt not kill, and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment.” On the surface, this appears to conform to the Mosaic law, that is, the sixth commandment, “Thou shalt not kill.” So far they are correct, but when they added “and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment,” they express their own commentary on that law. This was in error in two ways. First, they limited infraction to the deed that would get them into trouble. Secondly, they emphasized the judgment (which was the local judge), rather than being concerned about the Judge of heaven and earth. They did this because their concept of the law was in error. They were concerned about the *letter* of the law rather than the *spirit*. They focused their attention upon external behavior, rather than on inward attitudes and the condition of the heart. They viewed the keeping of the law as not doing evil and they conveniently overlooked the doing of good. When the Scribes and Pharisees examined themselves in the light of the sixth commandment (“Thou shalt not kill”) they concluded, “I have not killed; I did not take the life of my neighbor.” This made them look upon themselves as the keepers of the law, righteous before God, and therefore self-righteous and better than others.

\* Reprinted from the November 1, 1990 *Standard Bearer* (vol. 67, no. 3) with minor edits.



This aroused righteous indignation in Jesus.

It hath been said..., but I say unto you. That is the contrast. Will we follow the ancients with their tradition of men, or will we listen to Jesus who said not one jot or one tittle of the law shall pass away, until all be fulfilled. The real issue is the fulfillment of the law by Jesus, the demands of the law required of Him that cried, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” Hence it smells of the sulfur of hell. It requires of Him the sitting at the right hand of God, dispensing the Holy Spirit upon His beloved church, by which the law is written in our hearts.

That law then is not limited to avoiding murder; it includes loving the brother and sister.

Jesus deals with the negative aspect first.

Whoever is angry with his brother without cause is in danger of the judgment. Jesus does not say that anger is sinful. God Himself is angry with the wicked every day. Jesus was angry with the Pharisees. Paul wrote in Ephesians 4:26, “Be ye angry and sin not, let not the sun go down upon your wrath.” Anger without cause is sinful anger. It puts us in the wrong. We have no justification for it. The emphasis of this word is also anger that is internalized, when we do the ‘slow burn,’ when we let our minds play over and over how angry we are at someone, and we have thoughts of contempt and evil about him. At other times, we may vent this anger by name-calling. Jesus uses two illustrations. We might, first of all, call a man “Raca”—a word of contempt used in the days of Jesus. It had the connotation of judging worth, mental ability. At its root it means empty, hence empty-head, stupid, numskull, or, in today’s usage, airhead. The other word, “thou fool,” is more severe. It judges the brother’s character before God. The fool says there is no God. Moses used this terminology when he smote the rock and called Israel “rebels” (Num. 20:10), on account of which he never entered into the land of Canaan. It is playing God and assassinating another’s character.

The concern of Jesus focuses upon the brother or sister. We may not do this with any neighbor; but particular emphasis falls upon the family of God. This applies to our marriages, the way we treat each other as husband and wife, parent and child, fellow members of the church, our Christian neighbors with whom we work or next to whom we live. Sin against the sixth commandment is not just taking another’s life. It has to do with the condition of our heart as it is manifest in the way we treat the neighbor and speak to him or about him.

Accountability for such conduct is before God. Jesus says in verse 22 that whether we are called before the judgment (the local judge which in the day of Jesus had

the power to kill by the sword, with the approval of the Roman government) or the council (the Jewish Sanhedrin, which functioned like a supreme court in Jerusalem and had the power to stone to death), ultimately we have to deal with God. He alone has the power of Gehenna, the fires of hell. What a powerful way to expose the Pharisees’ concern for men while they ignore the God of the law.

Now Jesus deals with the positive aspect of the law, that is, with love. What better way to demonstrate love than to be reconciled to our brother or sister who has a grievance against us.

“If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee, leave there thy gift at the altar and first be reconciled to thy brother and then come and offer thy gift.” Jesus refers to the act of sacrifice. The people would come with their gift (a lamb, a turtle dove) to the priest at the altar for sacrifice. Part of their worship required spiritual reflection. They had to meditate upon their sins, on how they related to God and their neighbor. Upon doing this, if such a person remembers that his brother has a grievance against him, he must first be reconciled.

Jesus deliberately chose to say “hath ought against thee.” Sometimes we have something against our brother. This we are instructed to resolve in Matthew 18. But, here, we either know or imagine that our brother has something against us. We might be in the wrong, as far as he is concerned, and this causes a rupture in our relationship. Probably he is not on speaking terms. He might be avoiding us. We are suspicious that something is wrong. This would be the easiest for us to brush aside, for we could easily reason, “That’s his problem. If he doesn’t like the way I live, let him come to me.” This applies to our home life within marriage, to our dealing with our children, and to our dealings within the church.

Be reconciled to thy brother. Then come and offer thy gifts. The initiative must come from us. We cannot pray at home; we cannot come to church on the Lord’s Day; we cannot take the Lord’s Supper, until we are sure that not only am I right with my brother but he is right with me.

Why is this? The answer is the righteousness of the kingdom of heaven and the law of love that governs its citizens. If we truly love each other, we will be reconciled. We cannot be right with God if we are wrong with each other. “If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? This commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God love his brother also.” Or listen to



Psalms 66:18: “If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.”

God’s love for us is experienced in our love for Him and each other. Anger, hatred, is a barrier in the covenant of love.

The seriousness of this is that we have to deal with God. In verses 25, 26 Jesus illustrates this. If a man has financial difficulty, he ought to deal with his creditors, lest he be taken to court and the judge find him guilty

and he be imprisoned until he pay the last cent.

We had better settle our differences here, rather than have to stand before God’s judgment seat in the day of Christ. He has the power of Gehenna, the fires of hell.

How these words must humble us all.

Rather than being self-righteous, let us cling to the cross of Jesus and look to our Lord and cry for His Spirit of love.

The love that reconciles!

## Editor’s Notes

# Prof. R. Dykstra, Farewell...and welcome

Unprecedented, as far as I am aware. Prof. Russell Dykstra was but one year from finishing the five-year transition period into his retirement as faculty in the PRC seminary when on May 30 he accepted a call to become pastor of Byron Center, MI PRC. First, the pastorate (Doon and Hope GR); then twenty-five-years as professor at seminary; now back to the pastorate. At age 67. Sixty-seven these days is not what 67 was 50 years ago, but it still does not carry the strength of youth.

It was very understandable then that only two days later, at the *Standard Bearer’s* annual staff meeting on June 2, Prof. Dykstra announced his resignation as editor. His reason was easily understood. Full justice must be done to his work as pastor of Byron Center.

### The transition process for retiring professors in the seminary

The transition plan for replacing professors in our seminary is not understood by many in the PRC. Adopted by our synod in the 1980s, the plan calls for the transition from one professor to another to begin whenever a professor turns 65 years of age and end when he turns 70. The motivation was to avoid the situation of an older man becoming ill, his work ending abruptly, and placing on the new man the herculean task of teaching all the courses with no preparation. Thus, when any professor turns 65, synod extends a call to another to replace him. If synod’s appointee accepts the call, he first takes two years to obtain an advanced theological degree. Then he begins teaching a few new courses each year. As the older professor gradually gives up courses, the new man gradually takes more until he can teach all of them at the end of the five years. The plan aims to maintain quality instruction at our seminary.

Three professors have turned 65 in the past 27 months—first Prof. Dykstra, then Prof. Cammenga,

then the undersigned. If Rev. C. Griess or Rev. J. Engelsma accepts the call to take the undersigned’s place in Practical Theology and New Testament, that transition will begin immediately. Prof. Huizinga now enters the third year of transition to take Prof. R. Cammenga’s place as Professor of Dogmatics and Old Testament. In the case of Prof. Dykstra, Prof. Kuiper is but one year away from taking all his courses. And this provided Prof. Dykstra the opportunity to accept the call from Byron Center. Since Byron Center is close to seminary, he can teach a couple of courses to finish the transition. A happy providence of God both to provide for the seminary and grant another pastor to the churches.

We are thankful that God grants Prof. Dykstra health and strength of body and mind to begin a new pastorate.

But it means that we say “farewell” to Prof. Dykstra as an editor of the *SB* after 17 years sharing the helm with him.

### Prof. Russell Dykstra’s ‘legacy’

The last time editorship changed was in October of 2004 when the staff elected Prof. Dykstra (RJD) to be one of three co-editors of our magazine. Although each editor is responsible for his own writing—just as with all other writers—the editors worked harmoniously for these 17 years to produce the magazine. With the other editors, RJD was devoted to promoting and defending the faith and practice of the PRCA. We made editorial decisions together, planned special issues together, made decisions together about answering correspondence, and never had sharp contention and disagreement. We were committed to the same goal: to edit and deliver a magazine that was faithful to its original purposes, was faithful to the Protestant Reformed Churches, and that honored God by being faithful to His Word. Every three years, with permission of the staff, RJD and I

traded the responsibility as *primus inter pares*—the first among equals, that is, Editor-in-Chief. Which means not more authority but more responsibility.

The *SB* was what it was for the past 17 years not only but largely because of his faithful efforts. Let me mention some of them.

As Professor of Church History, Prof. Dykstra loved the yearly special issues on the Reformation. He often proposed the general topic and even worked out the details for the issue. Because these were some of his favorites, you will also usually see his name as one of the authors contributing to the explanation and application of this important history.

Each year, the *SB*'s tradition has been to editorialize on the agenda of the upcoming PRCA synod. For most of our 17 synods during that time, Prof. Dykstra was assigned that task. But he never merely described the agenda, he always analyzed it from a certain point of view, with a theme. "Blessed Opportunities," "A Multitude of Counselors," "These are Exciting Times," and "What do you get for \$1.6 million?" were some of the titles of editorials previewing synod that made the reader want to read. When he did, he was not bored.

As most readers of the *SB* will know, however, Prof. Dykstra's forte—because it was his great love—was to explain, develop, and apply the wonderful truth of the unconditional covenant of grace, which truth the Lord has preserved as a major distinctive of the Protestant Reformed Churches. When I asked Prof. Dykstra to reflect on his editorials, especially the *series* of editorials he had written, he worried whether he had been "lopsided" in his concentration on that topic. We can assure him that, among those who love the truth of God's gracious covenant with His people, no one shares that concern.

When Prof. Dykstra took the position of Professor of Church History and New Testament at the seminary in 1996, his major focus of study was the explanation and development of the history of 1953. In a major battle the PRCA defended the truth of the gracious covenant against the erroneous teaching of a conditional covenant. Dykstra's students will all remember the profitable Interim course he taught on the "Controversy of 1953," which he was determined to teach with enough frequency that no student missed this important aspect of PRC history. That focus on the doctrine of the covenant fit naturally with his editorials in the *SB*. Among *many* other topics he wrote about, "the covenant" rose above them.

Early in his tenure as editor, RJD wrote an important series of articles on the "Declaration of Principles," the document adopted by our denomination defending and explaining from the creeds our teaching of the uncondi-

tional covenant. Shortly thereafter came a longer series entitled "The Evil Fruits of the Conditional Covenant." Another series appeared in 2011 on "Controversy and Confusion over the Covenant." Most recently he wrote a lengthy series of editorials explaining the covenant doctrine in the Canons of Dordt.

It was not, however, only the *doctrine* of the covenant or the *history* of controversy over the doctrine about which he wrote. He was concerned about the *practical* implications of the doctrine. And that explains other articles and series of articles: about marriage, divorce, and children, with clearest connection to the doctrine of God's faithfulness to His covenant bride. And the many articles on the need for teachers for our covenant youth. And the series of eight articles on teacher-training in 2016 and '17.

Therefore, far from being a lopsided concentration on the covenant, this focus may be his 'legacy.' Thus, brother Dykstra, we thank God for your love for and commitment to His gracious and unconditional covenant of grace!

### Prof. Dykstra's future

Because the *SB* staff expressed their hope that Prof. Dykstra would continue writing in some capacity, he was willing to remain on the staff to write, perhaps, in another rubric.

So, Prof. Dykstra's place in the *SB* does not end with the conclusion of his editorship. Welcome back to the *SB* staff in this other capacity. May God provide you with a clear mind and ready pen.

On behalf of your colleagues in Classis East and the synod, welcome. As a new minister to Byron Center, you rejoin colleagues in Classis East; perhaps as a delegate to synod. They will appreciate your voice and help. May you yet be strong to "teach the people knowledge" before "the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them" (Eccl. 12). In gladness of spirit, serve God's beloved bride.

### Searching for new editor(s).

Because of Prof. Dykstra's resignation as editor, because Rev. K. Koole (another co-editor) indicated willingness to write only one more year, and because the undersigned will soon turn 66, the *SB* staff appointed a committee of four ministers to bring recommendations on replacing the editors and give advice for volumes 98 and 99—that is, starting already in October 2021.

May there be many writers who are willing to *bear the standard* for the cause of God and truth.

— BLG





### Delegates to Synod 2021

**Front row:** David Kregel, James Lanting, Rev. R. Van Overloop, Prof. D. Kuiper, Rev. R. Kleyn, Don Terpstra, Jack Regnerus, Rev. A. Brummel, James Holstege, Rev. S. Key;

**Middle row:** Keith Bruinsma, Rev. W. Langerak, Dave Poortinga, Rev. G. Eriks, Rev. J. Laning, Prof. R. Dykstra, Prof. R. Cammenga, Prof. B. Gritters;

**Back row, left-right:** Rev. J. Engelsma, Prof. B. Huizinga, Rev. C. Griess, Rev. C. Spronk, Ed Van Egdom, Nick Kleyn, Jr., Brendan Looyenga

## Synod 2021

### Georgetown PRC

June 8-12, 2021



#### Officers of Synod

President, Rev. R. Kleyn; Vice-President, Rev. G. Eriks; First Clerk, Rev. C. Spronk; Second Clerk, Rev. J. Engelsma



**Committee 1:** back: E. Van Egdom, Prof. R. Dykstra, D. Kregel; front: Rev. R. Kleyn, Rev. W. Langerak



**PRC Seminary Professors**  
back: R. Dykstra, B. Gritters, R. Cammenga; front: D. Kuiper, B. Huizinga



**Committee 2:** back: J. Regnerus, Prof. B. Huizinga, J. Holstege; front: Rev. C. Griess, Rev. J. Laning



**Committee 3:** back: B. Looyenga, Prof. B. Gritters, Prof. D. Kuiper, D. Terpstra; front: Rev. G. Eriks, Rev. J. Engelsma

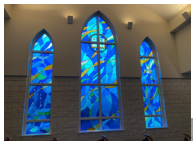


**Committee 4:** back: K. Bruinsma, Prof. R. Cammenga, J. Lanting; front: Rev. R. Kleyn, Rev. C. Spronk

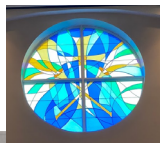


**Committee 5:** back: N. Kleyn, Jr., D. Poortinga; front: Rev. A. Brummel, Rev. R. Van Overloop





Georgetown PRC



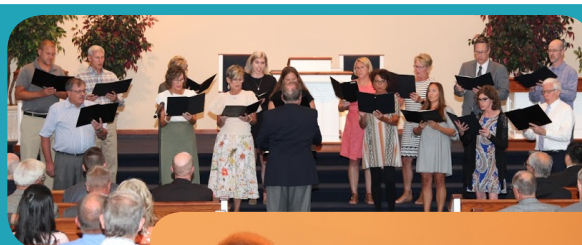
Sanctuary windows



Examination of Josiah Tan



Address by  
Missionary Daniel Holstege



Graduation of Josiah Tan





## Editorial

Prof. Russell Dykstra, in his last year as professor of Church History and New Testament in the Protestant Reformed Seminary, and newly installed pastor of Byron Center Protestant Reformed Church in Byron Center, Michigan

# Synod 2021: A unified commitment to serving Christ and His church

On Thursday, June 17, after nine days of committee meetings and open sessions, the 2021 Synod completed its works on the largest agenda in the eighty-two-year history of Protestant Reformed synods. It was a good synod, from many points of view. The blessed harmony of brothers in Christ was manifest through all the meetings and meals. This was not a feigned harmony, but genuine, based on the unity in the truth of Scripture and cemented by brotherly love.

That it was a unity based squarely on truth was immediately manifest in the solemn ceremony—no empty ritual—of the reading of the “Public Declaration of Agreement with the Forms of Unity.” That it was not merely formal but hearty unity in the truth was manifest soon thereafter in the examination of Mr. Josiah Tan. Mr. Tan is a seminary student from Covenant Evangelical Reformed Church in Singapore (CERCS), a sister congregation of the PRCA. The faculty of the Protestant Reformed Theological School recommended that Mr. Tan be examined at Synod, which was also the request of CERCS. This synodical exam was modified, containing parts of the usual synodical exam and parts of the typical classical exam, as had been done for our sister church in the Philippines prior to their forming a classis. The examination brought out clearly Mr. Tan’s knowledge and conviction of the Reformed faith taught him in the seminary. He likewise demonstrated his ability to prepare and deliver a solid, antithetical, Reformed sermon.

The delegates unanimously passed a motion “to approve the synodical examination of Mr. Tan and inform the CERC of Singapore that we judge that Mr. Tan is worthy to be declared eligible for a call for the ministry of the Word and sacraments.” The actual declaration of candidacy is left to the session (consistory) of his congregation. The entire examination was a joy to witness, not only for those at synod, but for those watching it online, many of whom were Singaporean friends and family, not to mention the elders of CERC watching all these proceedings with keen interest.

But before we leave this, I stress again that the dele-

gates heard Mr. Tan’s confession and conviction, and a hearty “Amen” resounded in the heart of each delegate. This is the truth that we unitedly believe and by God’s grace will maintain with all our might. It is an added joy that this same truth is confessed and maintained by our sister churches, and that this young man may one day soon become the pastor of a sister congregation. May God bless him and keep him faithful.

## Go ye into all the world...

The delegates continued to manifest unity in and commitment to the Reformed faith in the work Christ specifically gives to His church. Synod reviewed and approved the work of the three missionaries in the Philippines. Synod addressed a letter of encouragement to these men, stating,

We write to remind you of the trust and appreciation that the PRCA have for you men and for your labors. We thank God for your faithful work and the good fruit that God has produced for many years. We are grateful to God that you three men are united in the truth and in your commitment to preach and defend the truth against all errors and schism.

Synod demonstrated a commitment to be faithful to Jesus’ command to send forth the gospel. Informed officially that the PRC’s domestic missionary had accepted a call to a congregation, Synod authorized the Domestic Mission Committee to designate a calling church for a missionary and work hard at finding a field for the missionary. One ground stated that “missions is one of the primary callings of the church.”

Some members might be more than a bit surprised that Synod would be urging the DMC to pursue a calling church and missionary in light of the fact that the churches will be facing a time of numerous vacancies in the established congregations. Perhaps the King of the church will not call a man soon. Nonetheless, Synod urged the members to pray earnestly that God would provide the churches with many more ministers.



We know that only God calls men to the ministry. As churches we recently discovered that God does provide ministers in answer to fervent prayers. We were looking at a significant number of vacancies a few years ago. We pleaded with the Lord to send laborers, and He gave us a graduating class of seven—the largest in the history of the PRC. Out of love for God's truth and His church, let us be constant in heartfelt supplication for more, many more ministers. Synod gratefully approved the one student entering this fall.

### **...and teach others also**

Connected with preachers and preaching is synod's crucially important oversight of the Theological Seminary. This is crucially important because if error creeps undetected into the seminary, the churches are doomed. Future generations of generations will preach and teach the lie. God has graciously preserved the PRTS in the truth since the day that it started in June of 1925.

The appointment of another new professor to replace Prof. Gritters in Practical Theology brings this to everyone's attention. The "guard" has changed twice before, and it is soon to be completely changed a third time. The original professors were Revs. Herman Hoeksema and George M. Ophoff. The first change of the "guard" (with some overlap) brought in Professors Homer Hoeksema, Herman Hanko, Robert Decker, and David Engelsma. The second change of the guard came with the appointment of Professors Cammenga, Dykstra, and Gritters. The new guard, replacing these three are Professors Huizinga, Kuiper, and a third man to be appointed at this synod.

With enthusiasm and much thanks to God we can say that all the men nominated are gifted men, and all hold fast to the truth that God has entrusted to the PRC. Out of the nomination of four, Synod chose Rev. Cory Griess, and should he decline, Rev. Joshua Engelsma. Both men not only have deep roots in the PRC, but also connections to PRC ministers. Rev. Griess is the grandson of the late Rev. Jason Kortering, and Rev. Engelsma is the nephew of Prof. David Engelsma. I can testify that the seminary faculty will be delighted no matter which of the two men take up the work in the seminary.

### **Hitherto hath the Lord helped**

Another noteworthy appointment was a special committee to prepare a denominational celebration. In 2025, the PRC will be 100 years old. This will be a celebration of God's grace. His grace selected this tiny denomination to carry the banner of sovereign, particular grace, the banner of the unconditional covenant established with God's elect, and the banner of

the unbreakable bond of marriage. In deepest gratitude to God, we look forward to a celebration of His truth and His preserving grace as was done in 1950, 1975, and 2000.

### **In the multitude of counselors**

Necessity was laid upon Synod to deal with the aftermath of the discipline of a minister and his departure with members of the PRC. Synod addressed an open letter to those who have recently left the PRC, which letter appears in this issue of the *SB* (see p. 420).

Connected with this matter were numerous protests, and Synod dealt with all the protests submitted by members of the PRC. Synod considered carefully two groups of protests. One group protested a decision of the 2020 synod that involved a doctrinal matter. While synod did not sustain any of these protests, the decision resulted in explicit doctrinal clarity. Synod maintained previous decisions that, according to God's plan and work of salvation, a God-caused activity of saved sinners can precede a blessing from God. That God causes the activity means that God works in the believer the will and the doing, and the believer then lives out of that work. God is always first. And the activity is the not the cause of the blessing, nor does it earn the blessing. All blessings are merited only by Christ and flow to the believer by faith. But in God's plan, He so works that the activity of the believer comes first in time and the blessing follows.

A most interesting and helpful discussion was held on the relationship between faith, repentance, and good works. Some of the fruit of the discussion will be found in the *Acts of Synod*, but some discussion was profitable only for those who listened to it in person. Yet, it should be seen as a benefit rising out of the doctrinal disagreements found in the PRC in the last six years.

Another group of protests objected to the deposition of a PRC minister. The benefit coming out of this was twofold. First, the 2021 *Acts* will contain a careful timeline of events that corrects some of the past distortions of this history. Second, the grounds for deposition were carefully examined one last time, were found to be correct, and the deposition declared to be right.

Hundreds of manhours were put into the meetings of the various committees, and hundreds more in the discussions on the floor of synod. Protestants who came to synod had opportunity to ask questions and argue their points. Synod is a Reformed deliberative assembly. And it worked well. Elders from all walks of life and ministers from various parts of the country read, studied, listened to, discussed, proposed amendments, and finally voted unanimously not to sustain the protests.



What was particularly gratifying is that all who came to synod with protests were treated with respect and brotherly love. And all these protestants demonstrated the same attitude toward the synod. This is as it should be. Disagreements, even serious disagreements in the church of Christ, ought to be dealt with in such a spirit.

## In conclusion

This is my last synod as a professor-advisor, and having attended all but one of the last twenty-eight synods, I decided to offer a few personal reflections and suggestions.

First, I was often moved to give earnest thanksgiving to God. God has given to the PRC faithful ministers and elders to serve His church. I am thrilled to see the God-given wisdom and understanding displayed by these servants of Jesus Christ. Let us not cease to pray for our elders and ministers and include hearty thanksgiving in that prayer.

Second, I believe that the time allotted to examination of seminary students can be reduced, and that it should be. This is particularly so in Dogmatics. We must keep in mind that the synodical exam is not and cannot be exhaustive. The examination conducted at synod this year was reduced to twenty minutes per locus, or two hours of examination in Dogmatics. In twenty minutes, the delegates could easily see that the examinee knew and understood Reformed doctrine and was convicted of the truth. A longer exam consumes a tremendous amount of synod's time and concentration. In my judgment, it is not necessary.<sup>1</sup> Future synods would be well served if the TSC did a study of this and brought a proposal to reduce the time allotted.

Finally, I suggest that serious consideration be given to increasing the number of delegates to synod—from five ministers and five elders from each classis to six of each.

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To add some substance to the proposal, I point out that it was back in 1992 that synod increased the delegates from four ministers and elders to five of each. At that time, the PRC consisted of 5,894 members and had 209 council members and 26 ministers. Currently, the PRC have over 8,000 members, 321 council members, and 32 men active in the gospel ministry. (That latter figure does not include seminary professors but does include three missionaries. These numbers also indicate the serious need for more—many more ministers.)

I believe several advantages to this increase of delegates to synod are obvious. It would allow for six “pre-advice” committees to consider and make recommendations on the material of agenda. It would also allow more men to be involved in decisions. And it could, I hope, give more variety to the delegates. Currently, both classes are sending a group of ministers who attend year after year without significant variation in the delegations. Six should allow for more ministers, and one would hope, more variation. I would encourage both classes to seek to send a younger minister each year. This experience is very valuable and trains them for future service as well.

So much for my reflections and suggestions.

Finally, practical decisions of Synod 2021 included a reduction of the synodical assessments by \$75 dollars and appointing Zion PRC as the calling church for synod 2022, the Lord willing. Zion is looking ahead to the fact that a member of their congregation, Mr. Marcus Wee, also from Covenant Reformed Evangelical Church in Singapore, will likely be examined before synod in 2022. And we trust, with a reduced amount of time in the exam.

## Finally, brethren, pray for us

This is a smattering of the business of Synod 2021. Long ago the PRC decided to give every Protestant Reformed household a free copy of the yearly *Acts and Yearbook*. Do not squander the opportunity to acquaint yourself with the work of the church. Read the *Acts*. And pray that God will bless the many decisions for the good of the church and the glory of His name.

<sup>1</sup> For historical perspective, the first synodical exam was held in 1940, at which synod H. Hoeksema examined John Heys on three loci of Dogmatics from 2:30 to 3:00—ten minutes per locus! In 1947, three students were examined for 90 minutes total on the first three loci, or thirty minutes per locus, including an allowance of five minutes per locus for questions from delegates (*Acts 1947*, p. 29). Under our usual formula today for three students, each locus is allotted fifty minutes (for example, *Acts 2011*, pp. 179-180), after which questions are allowed from the delegates.

## Letter from PRC Synod 2021

*Synod 2021 adopted “an open letter to those who have recently left the PRCA calling them to repentance with the goal of biblical reconciliation.”*

*Synod instructed the Stated Clerk “to request that this letter be printed in the Standard Bearer. The SB gladly complies with this request.”*

Dear brothers and sisters who have left the PRCA over the recent controversy,

We write to you out of the sincere love we have for you in our Lord Jesus Christ and the deep grief we have over the division between us. Knowing it to be our solemn duty before God, we earnestly seek reconciliation in the biblical way of confession and forgiveness because such reconciliation is a reflection of the very heart of the gospel of reconciliation (II Corinthians 5:18-21). When reconciliation is sought and accomplished, God is glorified, which is our shared goal in this life and the life to come. The very gospel of Christ demands that we try to reconcile. In submission and obedience to Christ we attempt to begin a healing of the breach between us.

We come to you in humility. In the events of the recent controversy and the departure of many families we have humbly reflected on the lessons God is teaching us. He has graciously exposed weaknesses, which is more than we can get into by way of letter. We would ask you to approach us with this same humility and desire to confess where you have been wrong.

At the same time, we cannot confess that we have sinned in the suspension and deposition of Rev. Andy Lanning. Synod 2021 carefully adjudicated many protests concerning the deposition and the approval of the Synodical Deputies from Classis West. The synod has determined that this deposition was just and right before God.

Your departure from true churches of Christ and your following of a lawfully deposed man concern us deeply, and lead us to issue an earnest call that you repent of your sin and return to our fellowship, even as Jesus prays this for His church in John 17:21. This plea is sent with the desire of II Timothy 2:25-26, “In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.” We plead with you to reconsider what you have done and return to us. Be assured that we will humbly and mercifully receive you, as those who know the undeserved grace and mercy of our faithful covenant God.

The right way for this to happen is that you would return to the consistories from which you left and begin the process of reconciliation with them. Please prayerfully consider our plea, for the glory of God and the witness of Christ’s church in the midst of this world. Reconciliation would be an amazing witness before a divided world and church world of the beauty of the gospel of reconciliation.

In Christ’s service,  
Synod 2021 of the PRCA



### Pillar and ground of truth

Prof. Douglas Kuiper, newly appointed professor of Church History and New Testament in the Protestant Reformed Seminary

## The Council of Ephesus (AD 431) Background

The First Ecumenical Council (Nicea, AD 325) established the doctrine that Jesus Christ is truly

God, being of the same essence as the Father. The Second Ecumenical Council (Constantinople, AD 381)

reiterated the deity of Christ, began to work through the relationship between Christ's person and natures, and set forth clearly the deity of the Holy Spirit.

In the fifty years before the next ecumenical council met, theologians continued to investigate the relation between Christ's divine person and His two natures. What particularly made necessary the meeting of the Council of Ephesus in AD 431 was the error of Nestorianism.

### Mary, the God-bearer

The context in which Nestorius developed his views was a wrong view of Mary, the mother of Jesus, which many were promoting. They viewed her as an example of holiness, and some were suggesting that she was sinless. In time, the church viewed her as a co-mediator with Christ. For details about this development, the interested reader should consult a general church history book.<sup>1</sup>

Bearing on the Nestorian controversy is the fact that some began to call Mary *theotokos*, a Greek word meaning "God-bearer," and sometimes translated as "mother of God." Some in the church, reacting to the wrong views of Mary that were developing, also objected that this term exalted Mary too much. But other orthodox theologians, such as Athanasius and Gregory Nazianzen, readily used the term, although they rejected wrong views of Mary. They did not think that Mary gave God His existence, or gave existence to Christ in His divine person or nature. They were simply insisting that Jesus Christ was truly and fully God, and recognizing that Mary gave birth to Him in the flesh.

### Nestorianism

Nestorius became the patriarch of Constantinople in AD 428. This made him the second most important religious figure in the world, second only to the bishop of Rome. Nestorius thought it wrong to use the term *theotokos* under any circumstances, even if one did not mean to venerate Mary. The correct term in his mind was *Christotokos*, bearer or mother of *Christ*.

The issue was not only about terms, it was about Christ Himself. Who was He? Nestorius agreed that Jesus was both God and man. In this respect, Nestorius was true to the Councils of Nicea and Constantinople.

But how can Christ be both God and man? The true answer is that Christ is one person (divine) who possesses two natures (divine and human), and that in His birth (incarnation) the divine Christ took to Himself a human nature from Mary. Nestorius' answer was that Christ

had two natures because He had two persons, one divine and the other human. He viewed Christ's incarnation as a *joining* of the two persons, rather than a uniting of the human nature with the divine. While some scholars suggest that history has misrepresented him, this is what the church in that day understood him to teach.

### Opposition to Nestorius

The bishop of Alexandria at this time was Cyril. After the bishop of Rome and the bishop of Constantinople, the bishops of Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem held the next three most prominent positions in the church of that day.

Cyril argued that by speaking of Christ as two persons, Nestorius separated the natures of Christ, rather than distinguishing them. He also said that Nestorius undermined Christ's divinity by rejecting *theotokos*. And he pointed out that this undermined the reality of the incarnation, the ability of Christ to save us, and the way in which He carried out that salvation.

A war of words followed. Cyril charged Nestorius with twelve errors. Nestorius countered with twelve accusations of his own, arguing that Cyril was basically Apollinarian (see *Standard Bearer*, October 15, 2020). The emperor deposed Nestorius, and realized the need for an ecumenical council to settle the matter.

Did Cyril and Nestorius understand each other, or did they talk past each other? Many are of the opinion that the latter is true. However, in the end, Nestorius' view was condemned, and Cyril's upheld. And the word *theotokos* won the day, even among the orthodox.



<sup>1</sup> See Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, vol. 3, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Christianity, A.D. 311-600* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1989 reprint), 410-428.





## Search the Scriptures

Rev. Ronald Hanko, minister emeritus in the Protestant Reformed Churches residing in Spokane, WA

# Jonah's prayer (2)

### Jonah 2:1-10

One of the most remarkable things about Jonah's prayer is that most of the prayer is quotation from the Psalms. He quotes from Psalm 120:1 (v. 2), Psalm 42:7 (v. 3), Psalm 31:22 (v. 5), Psalm 69:1 (v. 7), Psalm 142:3 (v. 8), Psalm 3:8 (v. 8) and Psalm 31:6 (v. 9). Calling God his own mercy (v. 8) is also a reference to Psalm 144:2. These quotes not only show a close acquaintance with the Psalms on Jonah's part but also demonstrate the power of the Psalms both as the Word of God and as a divine record of the Christian's life and experiences. It can only be that the Psalms, speaking so clearly of our hope in times of trouble, were the motivation for Jonah's prayer of repentance and renewed faith.

As a prayer of renewed confidence and faith in God, Jonah's prayer shows us how in prayer and in the presence of God we learn His gracious purpose in afflicting us. Remembering Jonah,

Let the heart, therefore, of the believer ever say to itself, when cast by Christ into the furnace of affliction: "My Lord sits here as a refiner of silver; he would have me entirely separated from what mars the purity of my affections, and interferes with the integrity of my obedience. Let me fall in with his design, and, giving the dross of my corruption to be burnt up as in the fire of his judgment, devote myself anew as a living sacrifice to his fear; so that, if I must confess with the psalmist, 'Before I was afflicted I went astray,' with him also I may be enabled to add, 'But now I keep thy word.'"<sup>1</sup>

As a prayer of repentance, Jonah's prayer is also a wonderful illustration of God's readiness to forgive His people. David spoke of that in Psalm 32:5, "I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." John promises it in I John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Perhaps Jonah remembered David's words and was encouraged to confess his sins, but in doing so became proof of what John would later write.

What a motive to repent that is for us! In many cases God answers our prayers in His own time, but He never delays forgiveness. He does not delay because forgiveness of sins, our justification, was purchased with the blood of Christ and is the principal blessing of salvation, the key to all other blessings, without which also we cannot live.

Jonah mentions this twice in his brief prayer. He says, "I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the LORD, and he heard me; out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest my voice" (v. 2); and again, "When my soul fainted within me I remembered the LORD: and my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy temple" (v. 7). Surely that was a reason for his vow to sacrifice to God and his thanksgiving (v. 9).

God is not like us. He never turns a deaf ear to His people and never refuses their prayers when they come to Him in sincerity and truth. This is what I John 1:9 means when it says that God is faithful and just to forgive. He is faithful to His own purpose and work and can never overlook the sacrifice of His own Son. He is like the father in Jesus' parable who gladly received his wayward son, without even mentioning his sins and who immediately prepared for him the best of what he had.

This is pure grace. We do not deserve forgiveness. Our sins are committed against Him. We never see the wrong we do as we should, even when we are sorry. Our repentance is never sincere enough. Worst of all, we commit the same sins after we have repented of them. Forgiveness is possible only because Christ died for our sins and paid the full penalty for them so that it is as though we never had nor ever committed any sin.

Jonah is a living lesson of how unworthy we are of God's forgiveness. Not only was he disobedient and rebellious, with no ground for asking forgiveness, but also, having been forgiven, he went to Nineveh with an attitude that had not changed very much. He preached in Nineveh only what God had commanded him to preach, showed no compassion for the sinners in Nineveh, less even than for the gourd that shaded him and, having preached the minimum, sat and waited for Nineveh's destruction and was greatly dis-

<sup>1</sup> Patrick Fairbairn, *Jonah: His Life, Character and Mission* (Kregel Publications: Grand Rapids, MI, 1964), 81, 82.

appointed when God spared the city. His obedience was reluctant and grudging after he was vomited out by the fish.

Because God is always ready to forgive such unworthy sinners, so also must we be, especially when others confess their sins to us. We may not forgive grudgingly. We may certainly not say, “I forgive, but I cannot forget.” We may not use the seriousness of another person’s sins against us to delay forgiveness. Our forgiveness must be immediate as God’s is, otherwise our forgiveness is not sincere. All true forgiveness is like God’s.

Understanding God’s readiness to forgive and His gracious purpose in affliction, having repented and experienced God’s forgiving grace, though still in the fish’s belly, Jonah was thankful and showed his appreciation. God had heard his cries and saved him, though not yet from the fish, and Jonah expressed thanksgiving both in words of thanks and in vows. He confessed that salvation was of the Lord, a tribute to what God had done for him.

We do not know what vows Jonah made. Perhaps he had promised to go to Nineveh if God forgave him and delivered him from the fish. Perhaps he promised to make suitable thank offerings when and if he ever returned to the land of Israel. This was proper and good, but Jonah, so like us, soon showed how sinful he was even in his thanks. Certainly he was thankful for his own salvation, but never do we read that he was thankful for God’s grace to Nineveh.

The heart of Jonah’s thankfulness is his confession that salvation is of the Lord. Certainly he had seen that in his own case, but he was still blind to the full reality of what he confessed when he continued to wish and wait for Nineveh’s destruction and when he was angry over their repentance. How easy it is to confess the truth that God is sovereign in salvation and that salvation is all of grace when we ourselves are the objects of His grace, but how difficult when God shows grace to those who have injured us and against whom we are bitter and angry. How difficult it is to confess that salvation is of the Lord when He takes His Word from us and gives it to others, as He was doing with Israel and Nineveh and would do again in the New Testament.

Always we find ourselves denying in fact what we confess with our mouths when we say that salvation is all of grace and yet act as though we are somehow a little better than others and more worthy of God’s grace. We really deny that salvation is of the Lord when we find in ourselves a reluctance to forgive when God Himself has forgiven or when our forgiveness is half-hearted and begrudged. We find ourselves denying in deed what we confess with our mouths when there is in us a reluctance to see the gospel preached in places like Africa

or Asia and when we think that Christians from other cultures can never be truly Reformed as we are.

Jonah’s sins and our weaknesses only underline and magnify the truth that salvation is indeed of the Lord! Nevertheless, the focus must not be on Jonah or even on us, so like Jonah, but on the God of grace. That is the theme of the book, and the sailors, Jonah, Nineveh, and every believer show that in being always and forever unworthy of God’s great grace and salvation.

The book demonstrates so clearly that there is no difference, as far as God’s grace is concerned between the Jew, Jonah, and the Gentile Ninevites and sailors, no more than there is between bond and free, male or female, black or white. As Paul says, they are all one in Christ Jesus. It takes the same grace to save the worst of criminals as it does to save someone who was born and raised in a pious home, the same grace to save a heathen idolater as to save one born in the line of the covenant. “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God (Rom. 4:23).

All of salvation must be of grace, therefore. Not only must regeneration and the new birth that first deliver sailors and Ninevites and us from unbelief and idolatry be of grace, but so must the conversion of a wayward and disobedient Jonah be of grace. Not only justification, but also sanctification is pure grace. Holiness, assurance, adoption, communion and fellowship with God, tears for sin, humility, peace, joy, and all the other good fruits of a Christian life are all grace—and grace without works. Works themselves are the fruit of grace.

All this traces back to the cross of our Savior, the ever-flowing fountain of grace. Nothing that is pleasing to God, that He receives, is ever from us but all was purchased by Christ Jesus. Even the delight we take in God’s work of grace, the desire we find in ourselves to please Him and the feeble efforts we make to serve Him, which He counts good works, are grace, for “For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure” (Phil. 2:13). When finally God rewards our well-doing that too is grace added to grace.

This is the source of humility, for what do I have as a reason for pride or for setting myself above others when I have nothing that I have not received? It is the beginning of a life of praise and thanks and obedience, for if He begins the work of grace in us He will also finish it (Phil. 1:6). It leads us to wait upon God and not run ahead of Him or think that anything depends on us. Truly salvation is of the Lord!

That grace traces back to God’s eternal purpose in election. His choice, not ours, is the difference between a repentant Jonah and thousands of unrepentant Israelites. That stands out in the case of Jonah himself, but ever so starkly in the salvation of the heathen sailors who

heaved Jonah overboard and of the Ninevites. They and only a very few others in the Old Testament were saved from among the Gentiles. Why? Because the Ninevites were a better people than the other nations? Because the sailors had a better opportunity than most to see the power and glory of God?

The Ninevites were among the wickedest and cruellest of the nations. The sailors belonged to a class that even today is notorious for blasphemy and whoring, as the career of another Jonah, John Newton, illustrates. As God said to Israel, “The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: But because the LORD loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt” (Deut. 7: 7, 8).

God made known something of His eternal counsel, His

love before time to Jonah. Jonah must have known Psalm 32, but he certainly learned to sing it with new fervor:

I graciously will teach thee  
The way that thou shalt go,  
And with My eye upon thee  
My counsel make thee know.  
But be ye not unruly,  
Or slow to understand,  
Be not perverse, but willing  
To heed My wise command.

The sorrows of the wicked  
In number shall abound,  
But those that trust Jehovah,  
His mercy shall surround;  
Then in the Lord be joyful,  
In song lift up your voice;  
Be glad in God, ye righteous,  
Rejoice, ye saints, rejoice.



## Taking heed to the doctrine

Prof. Brian Huizinga, professor of Dogmatics and Old Testament in the Protestant Reformed Theological Seminary

### As to our good works (11)

## Relating good works and justification (g)

Previous article in this series: April 15, 2021, p. 327.

### The testimony of the gospels

The obedience of Christ comprehends the totality of the Father’s will as it was perfectly performed by Christ, the Servant of Jehovah, during His vicarious life on earth. Last time we demonstrated that the Scriptures and Reformed confessions teach that Christ’s perfect, lifelong obedience is imputed to our account in justification as our righteousness before God. Romans 5:19 teaches, “For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.” Even as many are reckoned or constituted (“made”) sinners by the disobedience of Adam, so many are reckoned or constituted (“made”) righteous by the obedience of Christ. Belgic Confession, Article 22 states: “But Jesus Christ, imputing to us all His merits and so many holy works which He has done for us, and in our stead, is our Righteousness.”

The Gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—contribute to the divine revelation of our justification by presenting to us everything we must know of our Lord’s life of obedience. It would be a serious misun-

derstanding of the Scriptures to suppose that while Romans and Galatians prominently feature the teaching of justification, the Gospels, among other books, are completely or nearly silent on this subject. How could four divinely inspired books that go by the name “Gospels” contribute nothing or scarcely little to the revelation of that which is the very heart of the gospel? Besides, including Jesus’ doctrine of justification as taught in His well known parable of the Pharisee and the publican in Luke 18:9-14, the four Gospels make their significant contribution to the glorious doctrine of justification by showing the perfect lifelong obedience of our Lord as He lived out the will of His Father on this earth.

The Gospels do not provide a comprehensive, day-by-day account of Jesus’ life from the manger to the cross. In fact, if the Gospels were regarded as nothing more than a biography or history, they would fail miserably, for they are silent on most of the years of Jesus’ life and tend to focus on His suffering. Moreover, a written Gospel is not merely the exhibition to sinners of a perfect model for a holy life. Fundamentally, the Gos-



pels are the heavenly, written revelation of the God of our salvation who was in His incarnate Son Jesus Christ accomplishing everlasting righteousness for us who are heirs appointed unto salvation.

When we open the Gospels and read of Christ's life, preaching, miracles, travels, encounters, dialogues, sufferings, and offering of Himself to the death of the cross, we are reading of the obedience by which we are saved. The Gospels reveal to us Jesus' life, for He is "the life" (John 14:6) and by His life "we shall be saved" (Rom. 5:10). Everywhere He went, step by step, whether as a twelve-year-old traveling from Nazareth to the Passover in Jerusalem, or as an adult journeying through Judea, Samaria and the distant reaches of Galilee, He was about His Father's business. Especially during the last three or so years of His life, when He publicly discharged His office as the Mediator of the covenant, He was consciously fulfilling all righteousness on behalf of all whom the Father had given Him.

Although each Gospel has its own distinctive features, all four present a striking inner unity. Regardless of how and where each begins, they all reach their climax in a most sobering, humbling, alluring, stirring, and vividly detailed account of the crucifixion, as the supreme act of obedience, and the resurrection. The Gospels reveal to us the perfect life, death, and resurrection of Christ who is our righteousness before God.

### The testimony of the disciples

Let's appreciate our Lord's obedience by beholding Him in the Gospels from the viewpoint of His disciples. They were eye-witnesses of Jesus' perfect obedience. Even as no one knows the Father like the Son who dwells in the bosom of the Father (John 1:18), so among men, no one knew our Lord with such intimacy as John, the beloved disciple who leaned upon Jesus' breast (John 13:23). Speaking for the other disciples, the inspired John opens his first epistle with the words, "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life," (I John 1:1). Amazing! They saw and handled the Word of life. While the disciples could not see Jesus' pure heart, they heard His own testimony of it, and with their own eyes they saw the evidences of it when they beheld the Savior's life up close. This is how they identified Him—"Jesus Christ the righteous" (I John 2:1). What a striking designation, for the closer we draw to some one the more we behold his *un*righteousness. The disciples drew close to our Lord, beholding His actions, hearing His words, looking upon Him with inspection and contemplation, and they concluded—"Jesus Christ

the righteous!" They lived with a perfect man—not the man of the dust who was of the earth earthy and fallible—but the man from heaven. They lived with the Word of Life in a world of the curse of death, walked in the darkness with the Light in whom there is no darkness, and sojourned here below with Him who is from on high.

What obedience unfolded before them! In the language of the Psalms, which all the disciples knew, Jesus never walked in the counsel of the ungodly, never stood in the way of sinners, and never sat in the seat of the scornful. His delight was in God's law day and night. He did not backbite with His tongue. He did no evil to His neighbor, and took up no reproach against His neighbor. He did not put out His money to usury. He took no reward against the innocent. His hands were clean. His heart was pure. He did not lift up His soul unto vanity. He did not swear deceitfully. He set no wicked thing before His eyes. He hated the work of those that turned aside; it did not cleave unto Him.

Consider some of the commandments of God as explained by our Heidelberg Catechism. The disciples lived alongside the only one who kept these precepts perfectly. Contrary to the charge of His enemies who accused Jesus with blasphemy, He never profaned or abused the name of God; nor did He by silence or connivance partake of such horrible sins in others. He used the holy name of God in no otherwise than with fear and reverence. Contrary to the claims of the Pharisees, Jesus did not desecrate the Sabbath, but diligently frequented the synagogue to hear or proclaim the Word of God and to do good to the needy. He never bucked authority. He showed all honor, love, and fidelity to Joseph and Mary, patiently bearing with their weaknesses and infirmities. When the devious trappers came with their nets and snares to try to trap Jesus in His words and expose Him as a seditious fellow who disturbed the peace of Rome, the disciples listened with the crowds and marveled. Jesus recognized the validity of the civil government and honored the rule of Caesar and God over him by proclaiming, "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's" (Matt. 22:21). Never did even the smallest inclination contrary to God's commandments arise in His heart, but at all times He hated sin with His whole heart and delighted in all righteousness.

The disciples watched as Jesus was constantly opposed by bitter foes. Yet, even in the most trying of circumstances when patience wears thin and the meekest man on earth would have become exasperated and overwhelmed by his hasty spirit so that he smote a rock, Jesus never faltered. He never lost control of His spirit

or became like a city that is broken down and without walls, but in ruling His spirit He was like the man who takes a city. No idle word passed through the door of His lips. Not one thought of His heart went astray. A grumbling complaint He never made, not even when He went forty days without food or endured divine stripes for sins He never committed. Only holiness, pure and undefiled, proceeded from His heart.

The disciples must have beheld with wonderment as in all His eating, drinking, walking, conversing, preaching, teaching, healing, correcting, chiding, condemning, and praying, His every syllable and breath were most excellent and pure. Whether before friend or foe, whether sitting on a boat or hanging on a cross, whether in making wine at a festive wedding or making a whip in a filthy temple, whether weeping at a grave or praying in a desert place, whether in taking a dead daughter by the hand to bring her back to life or in opening up His palms to the nails of Rome, whether in being anointed with expensive ointment while reclining in a house or in being reproached and slandered by unnumbered foes who would do Him wrong, His heart was always beating moment by moment, beat after beat, in harmony with God's.

What intercourse between heaven and earth! From heaven sounded the great command of all the ages, "Love Me with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength!" From earth returned to God the perfect heart, the perfect life, the perfect obedience. What harmony! Back down from the excellent glory came the divine approval, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased!" Who had ever heard such a testimony? Of all other men heaven said, "None good, no not one." Again, John was there on the holy mount with Peter and James, hearing heaven's approval of their Lord and seeing Him appareled in the blinding majesty and glory of heaven. Jesus Christ the Righteous!

Obedience for the holy Jesus always meant suffering, but even when obedience meant agony no tongue can tell such that Jesus' heart was broken by reproach and His soul was full of grief, He pressed on in His perfect, willing obedience. He took the cup. It was not merely a cup full of man's venomous hatred. It was God's cup, filled to the top with the boiling and infinite wrath of the most high and holy God against whose majesty all our sins are

committed. He wavered not, but said in perfect submission, "Thy will be done." He drank it with all its bitter dregs. He humbled Himself unto death, even the hellish death of being suspended between heaven and earth where the curse of death descended on the Word of Life. Every moment of Jesus' life, including at the end when He poured out His soul in death, He yielded Himself to the Father's will. He said, "I delight to do thy will," and "It is my meat to do his will (John 4:34). This holy man did not possess a mere beginning of obedience, nor an obedience worked in Him by another. He possessed His own obedience as the Son of God, and every work He performed was completely perfect in conception, commencement, performance, and accomplishment.

Say with all true believers everywhere: I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord! Behold, Thou art fair my love, all fair, there is no spot in Thee! Jesus Christ the Righteous!

## Conclusion

When we think and speak of the perfect work of Christ and what He did to obtain righteousness for us, we must focus on His crucifixion as His highest and crowning act of obedience. Every faithful herald of the gospel is determined to glory in nothing "save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Gal. 6:14) and is determined to know nothing "save Jesus Christ and him crucified" (I Cor. 2:2). We must also celebrate His victorious resurrection as do all four of the Gospels, for Jesus was raised for our justification (Rom. 4:25). Nevertheless, the majority of the content of the Gospels is the life of Christ. If we separate His life of obedience from His cross, then our eyes fail to behold the full glory of Jehovah our Righteousness.

Next time we will take up the significance of this obedience for us in God's covenant.

**What intercourse between heaven and earth! From heaven sounded the great command of all the ages, "Love Me with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength!" From earth returned to God the perfect heart, the perfect life, the perfect obedience. What harmony! Back down from the excellent glory came the divine approval, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased!" Who had ever heard such a testimony?**



## Believing and confessing

Prof. Ronald Cammenga, rector and professor of Dogmatics and Old Testament in the Protestant Reformed Theological Seminary

# Of the predestination of God and the election of the saints

## Second Helvetic Confession, chapter 10a

### *God Has Elected Us out of Grace.*

From eternity God has freely, and of His mere grace, without any respect to men, predestinated or elected the saints whom He wills to save in Christ, according to the saying of the apostle, “God chose us in him before the foundation of the world” (Eph. 1:4). And again: “Who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not in virtue of our works but in virtue of his own purpose and the grace which he gave us in Christ Jesus ages ago, and now has manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus” (II Tim. 1:9-10).

In chapter 9 of the Second Helvetic Confession (SHC), the teaching that the free will of the sinner is the cause and origin of salvation was rejected. Now in chapter 10, the confession becomes positive, identifying that which *is* the cause and origin of our salvation. Not man’s will but God’s eternal and unchangeable will determines who are, as well as who are not, included in the “company of the elect.” This is the doctrine of predestination, which was defended by all the Protestant Reformers. Without exception they identified the ultimate cause of the salvation of lost sinners as the foreordination of God. The Reformed confessions echo this teaching. The contrast could not be sharper. Not man’s determination, but God’s determination; not man’s choice, but God’s choice; not man’s decision, but God’s decision; not man’s will, but God’s will is decisive in salvation.

All the emphasis of this first paragraph is on God: “From eternity *God*...of *His* mere grace...predestinated or elected the saints whom *He* wills to save....” Both Scripture passages that are appealed to in support of divine predestination emphasize the activity of God and of God alone. Ephesians 1:4 is a classic passage in Scripture that the church has always understood to teach sovereign predestination. There the apostle teaches that *God* chose us before the foundation of the world. In II Timothy 1:9 and 10, the apostle teaches that it is

*God* who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, according to *His* purpose and grace.

The fact that the one who predestinates us is God and that His sovereign will alone is the cause of our salvation underscores the grace of God in salvation. From beginning to end, the work of the salvation of sinners is the work of God’s grace. They are unable to save themselves. He alone is able to conquer death and hell, overcome sin and Satan. They are unworthy of being saved. In His grace, He determines to save them although they are unworthy.

This underscores that God’s salvation of sinners is due to His grace alone. “Of His mere grace, without any respect to men,” the SHC says, God predestinated those whom it was His will to save in Jesus Christ. Repeatedly, the Scriptures exalt the grace of God in salvation. Ephesians 1:4 and 5 teach the truth of predestination. Verse 6 sets forth the purpose of election, that we might be “to the praise of the glory of his grace.” In I Corinthians 15:10, the apostle declares, “But by the grace of God, I am what I am.” In Romans 11:5, the apostle speaks of the “remnant according to the election of grace,” directly joining God’s grace and predestination. And in Ephesians 2:5, the apostle affirms that “by grace ye are saved.” The truth of sovereign predestination ensures that our salvation is of grace, all of grace, of grace alone!

### *We Are Elected or Predestinated in Christ.*

Therefore, although not on account of any merit of ours, God has elected us, not directly, but in Christ, and on account of Christ, in order that those who are now ingrafted into Christ by faith might also be elected. But those who were outside Christ were rejected, according to the word of the apostle, “Examine yourselves, to see whether you are holding to your faith. Test yourselves. Do you not realize that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you fail to meet the test!” (II Cor. 13:5).

We are not predestinated to salvation because of anything in us. Rather, we are elected in Jesus Christ.



There is no worthiness in us who are elected, but all our worthiness is in Jesus Christ: “[A]lthough not on account of any merit of ours, God has elected us, not directly, but in Christ and on account of Christ.” Our salvation is not due to our work, but it is due to the perfect work of Jesus Christ. We do not make ourselves worthy of salvation, but all our worthiness is in Jesus Christ. God’s grace to us is always His grace “in Christ and on account of Christ.” Outside of Jesus Christ there is no grace of God, the advocates of common grace notwithstanding. All who are outside of Jesus Christ are outside of God’s grace. And all who are outside of God’s grace are doomed to perish everlastingly. For them there is no salvation and no possibility of salvation. Outside of Christ, they are lost in the guilt of their sins.

In His grace toward us, God gives us to Jesus Christ, making Christ our Head and legal representative. That we are *in* Jesus Christ is just another way of saying that Christ is our Head. This is the point of comparison between the headship of Adam and the headship of Christ according to I Corinthians 15:22: “For as *in* Adam [our first head] all die, even so *in* Christ [our second Head] shall all be made alive.”

The Scriptures emphasize that God has predestinated us in Jesus Christ. In Ephesians 1:4 Paul says that God “hath chosen us in him,” that is, in Christ. In verse 6 he goes on to say that God “hath made us accepted in the beloved.” “The beloved” is the beloved Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ. In Romans 16:13, Paul salutes Rufus who is “chosen in the Lord.” Rufus has not only been chosen *by* the Lord but *in* the Lord, that is, in the Lord Jesus Christ. Like all who are predestinated by God, Rufus was chosen *in* Christ. In I Corinthians 1:27-29, the apostle teaches that God has chosen the foolish, the weak, the base things of this world, and things that are not so that no flesh should glory (boast) in His presence. He concludes the chapter in verse 30 by saying, “But of him [that is, of God] are ye in Christ Jesus.” He means that of God we are chosen, or, predestinated “in Christ Jesus.” God’s election of us is always in Christ Jesus. That truth is confirmed by what we read in Ephesians 3:11, “According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

The second paragraph of chapter 10 of the SHC is the explanation for the exclusiveness of the Christian gospel. It sets forth the reason on account of which the gospel of grace is an offence in our day, as it has been in every age. For the gospel proclaims a salvation of God that is not wider than Jesus Christ and those who are in Jesus Christ. That teaching is offensive in our age of toleration—toleration, that is, for everything but the truth and for everyone but those who confess the truth. The

truth of the gospel proclaims God’s salvation of those, all those, but only those, who are in Jesus Christ. All who are outside of Jesus Christ are not and cannot be saved: “those who are outside Christ [are] rejected.” The distinctiveness of the Reformed faith is not long going to be tolerated in our omni-tolerant, broad-minded age. Even now, persecution looms on the horizon for any who dare to teach that outside of Jesus Christ there is no salvation.

*We Are Elected for a Definite Purpose.*

**Finally, the saints are chosen in Christ by God for a definite purpose, which the apostle himself explains when he says, “He chose us in him for adoption that we should be holy and blameless before him in love. He destined us for adoption to be his sons through Jesus Christ that we should be to the praise of the glory of his grace” (Eph. 1:4, 5, 12).**

Election has a purpose. All that God wills and does He wills and does with a view to accomplishing His purpose. As the all-wise God, He does nothing randomly or by mistake. He always has an end or goal in view. And all that He does and determines is to reach the end that He has determined. Nothing stands in the way of the goal that He has decreed. Nothing frustrates His sovereign purpose. Not the warfare of the Devil, nor the assaults of the world, nor even the opposition of false brethren can hinder the realization of God’s purpose.

God is God! He is the almighty God, who is absolutely sovereign in all His works and ways. He says through the prophet Isaiah, “My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure” (Is. 46:10). Solomon says in Proverbs 19:21, “There are many devices in a man’s heart; nevertheless the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand.” And in Proverbs 21:30, he goes so far as to say, “There is no wisdom nor understanding nor counsel against the Lord.” Obviously, there are those who take counsel against the Lord and against His church. But ultimately, they cannot frustrate God’s purposes. God’s counsel stands.

Often in Scripture predestination is referred to as the purpose of God. In Romans 9:11 God’s election of Jacob and His reprobation of Esau is referred to by the apostle Paul as “the purpose of God according to election.” In Ephesians 1:11 he speaks of those who are “predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.” Writing to Timothy, Paul says, “Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our

works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began” (II Tim. 1:9).

Fact is, God often works in and through His enemies to accomplish His purposes, particularly His purpose of predestination. The salvation of the elect and of the elect church is secure. Just as the purpose of reprobate Judas Iscariot and the wicked leaders of the people did not frustrate God’s purpose in *the Elect*, our Lord Jesus Christ, so do the reprobate wicked also serve the ultimate purpose of God. That may not always seem so to us, as it did not seem so to Jesus’ disciples. They were baffled and despairing over the apparent frustration of God’s purpose when Christ’s enemies nailed Him to the cross. Nevertheless, God was working out His purpose and using those who seemed to be set against God’s cause to accomplish exactly what He had determined, as Acts 4:27 and 28 teach clearly: “For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.”

The purpose of God in predestination is twofold.

Above all else, the purpose of God is His own glory. In reality, there is no truth like the truth of predestination that ascribes the glory for salvation to God. “For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen.” (Rom. 11:36). That is the conclusion of the apostle to the God-inspired instruction concerning and defense of sovereign predestination in Romans 9-11. God has mercy on whom He wills to

have mercy, and God hardens those whom He wills to harden that all the glory for salvation may be His and His alone. Those who are saved do not distinguish themselves from those who are not saved. The elect do not show themselves to be more deserving of God’s election than the reprobate. The distinction between elect and reprobate does not lie at all in those who are chosen or in those rejected. The difference between them is due to the eternal will of God in predestination.

At the same time, God in His goodness has joined the

purpose of the glory of His name to the everlasting goodness and glory of the elect. Already in this life, the comfort of the truth of predestination is that nothing can frustrate our salvation. Nothing can be against us, but all things are for us, as the apostle assures the people of God in Romans 8:31, “What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?”

And in the end, we shall be

glorified together with Christ, our Head and the Elect of God. That is how the golden chain of salvation ends in Romans 8:29 and 30. It begins in verse 29 with God’s foreknowledge and predestination. And it ends on this exultant note: “Them he also glorified.”

God’s predestination in eternity past, reaches its glorious climax in eternity future—glorified! Now suffering and sorrow, being evil spoken of and enduring scorn, rejected and misrepresented, persecuted and killed. But the end? Life and glory. Everlasting life and heavenly glory.

Indeed, “For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen.” (Rom. 11:36). Amen and amen!

**Fact is, God often works in and through His enemies to accomplish His purposes, particularly His purpose of predestination. The salvation of the elect and of the elect church is secure. Just as the purpose of reprobate Judas Iscariot and the wicked leaders of the people did not frustrate God’s purpose in *the Elect*, our Lord Jesus Christ, so do the reprobate wicked also serve the ultimate purpose of God.**



## News from our churches

Mr. Perry Van Egdome, member of the Protestant Reformed Church of Doon, Iowa

### Trivia question

Who was the seminary student that graduated in 1999 and accepted the call to Loveland, CO PRC? Answer found later in this article.

### Denominational activities

The pre-synodical service was held Monday, June 7, at 7 P.M. in Georgetown PRC with Rev. R. Van Overloop preaching. Synod convened on June 8, at 8 A.M. in

Georgetown PRC. Seminary graduation took place on Thursday, June 10 in Georgetown PRC, at 7:30 p.m. with Prof. D. Kuiper giving the address on "Putting One's Neck to the Work." To watch the program, visit the seminary's YouTube channel at [prcts.org](http://prcts.org).

### Minister activities

Byron Center PRC called Prof. R. Dykstra (PRCA Seminary). On May 30 Prof. Dykstra announced his acceptance of this call. This is an historical first in the PRC. He was to be installed on June 27. Hudsonville PRC formed a new trio of Rev. R. Barnhill (Peace PRC-Dyer, IN), Rev. W. Bruinsma (Pittsburgh PRC), and Rev. R. Kleyn (Covenant of Grace PRC-Spokane, WA) with Rev. Bruinsma receiving the call. On June 13 he declined this call. Wingham PRC has formed a trio of Rev. R. Barnhill (Peace PRC-Dyer, IN), Rev. S. Regnerus (Lynden PRC), and Rev. M. De Boer (Edgerton PRC) with Rev. Barnhill receiving their call. On June 6 he declined this call. The Consistory at Crete PRC announced the following trio to the congregation: Rev. N. Decker (Grandville PRC), Rev. J. Engelsma (Doon PRC), and Rev. C. Spronk (Faith PRC). On June 13, they extended a call to Rev. J. Engelsma. Kalamazoo, MI PRC formed a trio of Revs. R. Barnhill, M. De Boer, and D. Lee, with Rev. Barnhill receiving this call. On June 27, he announced his decline of this call.

### Congregational activities

The congregation at Doon, IA voted to proceed with a building project that includes enlarging the narthex, adding restrooms and a council room. Fundraising has begun.

### Young peoples activities

The young people at Edgerton, MN thanked the congregation for attending the Ice Cream Social this spring and for the generous donations that will help them attend the Western Young People's Retreat.

Hull, IA Young People's Society invited everyone in the area to their annual Memorial Day Pancake Breakfast, May 31 at Trinity CHS. A time of fellowship and a delicious breakfast of pancakes, cinnamon rolls, egg casseroles and fresh fruit were enjoyed. A freewill donation was taken in support of the PRYP's Convention.

### School activities

Covenant Christian High School commencement took place on Friday evening, June 4, at the Grandville Middle School football field in Grandville. Rev. G. Eriks delivered the address. Due to current COVID-19

regulations, attendance was limited to 1,000 people. Each graduate was given 9 tickets to distribute to their families and friends.

### Evangelism activities

From the bulletin of Edgerton, MN PRC:

What does God's Word say about homosexuality? Today, some in the church world and in Christian colleges argue that when two of the same gender are in a committed relationship of love, homosexuality is a good thing and to be celebrated. Come to Edgerton PRC on Friday evening, June 25, at 7:00 p.m. to hear Pastor Matt DeBoer explain what the Bible really teaches about this subject, how we can answer popular objections, and how church leaders and church members are to respond to homosexuality.

### A glance back in time—1998-99

Work began on Bethel PRC's new building...Georgetown PRC also...Randolph PRC completed a building project that added a separate building consisting of two classrooms and restrooms. Classis West examined and approved Pastor-elect Daniel Kleyn as minister of the Word and sacraments. Then he was installed in Edgerton, MN.... Profs. D. Engelsma and H. Hanko spoke at the conference in Northern Ireland.... In Hull, IA they adopted a proposal to build a new parsonage.... Rev. and Mrs. R. Smit thankfully received the gift of a daughter, Rebekah Ann.... Rev. R. Hanko continued to labor as missionary to Northern Ireland.... Loveland, CO PRC celebrated its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a program of thanksgiving and praise.... Rev. A. Brummel and his wife Crysta rejoiced in the birth of a son, Brandon Trey.... Rev. and Mrs. J. Laning received an infant son, born about three months prematurely at under three pounds. The babe, Samuel continued to do well and came home in December after a hospital stay of about two months.... Seminarian G. Eriks finished his six-month internship in Loveland, CO.... The 1999 Young People's convention was hosted by Hope PRC of Redlands, CA.... Rev. G. VanBaren submitted a request for honorable emeritation.... Mission work was ended in San Luis Valley, CO and begun in Spokane, WA.... The council of South Holland, IL PRC approved the organization of a daughter congregation in the Dyer, IN area.... The newly organized congregation in northwest Indiana chose the name Cornerstone PRC.... Candidate G. Eriks accepted a call to Loveland, CO PRC.

"To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven." Ecclesiastes 3:1.



# Announcements

## Resolution of sympathy

The Council of Hope PRC of Redlands, CA, extend their sincere sympathy to fellow officebearers Ron VanVoorthuysen and his wife Laura, Jonathan denHartog and his wife Ronda, and Mark VanVoorthuysen and his wife Jade, and their families, in the passing away of their mother and grandmother, **Audrey VanVoorthuysen**. Sympathy is also extended to her husband (and retired officebearer) Everett VanVoorthuysen, and grandchildren Shawn and Lorianne Karsemeyer, David and Lynnae Terpstra, brother Bill Feenstra, sisters-in-law Beverly Feenstra and Janice Feenstra, all grandchildren and great-grandchildren, and many nieces and nephews. “The LORD is my shepherd.... Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.... And I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever” (Psalm 23).

Pastor Matt Kortus, President  
Peter Smit, Clerk

## Resolution of sympathy

The Council and congregation of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Holland express Christian sympathy to Eunice and her family in the death of her husband of 49 years, **Cal Yonker**. Sympathy as well to Tom and Brenda, Joel, and Megan Pastoor, Caleb and Kim Pastoor, Brent and Wilma Overway, Brett and Susan VanKoevering, Clare Haveman, and Les and Joyce Haveman in the death of their father, grandfather, uncle, and brother-in-law. According to His good and all-wise purpose, the Lord took Cal home to glory on May 23, 2021. We sorrow for the loss of a member of our body, yet we rejoice that God has brought him into the perfect peace and glory of heaven. His faith has become sight, and the words of our Lord give comfort: “In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also” (John 14:2-3).

Rev. Justin Smidstra, President  
Jack Warner, Asst. Clerk

## Resolution of sympathy

The Council and congregation of the First PRC of Holland express Christian sympathy to Jack and Kim Warner, the Will and Jayna Streiff family, and the Jordan and Kara Reitsma family, in the death of their mother, grandmother and great grandmother, **Genevieve Warner**. The Lord took Gen home to glory on June 2, 2021. The words of the psalmist are truly her own: “As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness” (Psalm 17:15).

Rev. Justin Smidstra, President  
Jack Warner, Asst. Clerk

## Classis East

Classis East will meet in regular session on Wednesday, September 8, 2021, at 8:00 A.M., in the Grandville Protestant Reformed Church, Grandville, Michigan. Material for this session must be in the hands of the stated clerk no later than August 9, 2021.

Rev. C. Spronk, Stated Clerk

## Classis West

Classis West of the Protestant Reformed Churches will meet in Crete PRC on Wednesday, September 29, 2021, at 8:30 A.M., the Lord willing. All material for the agenda is to be in the hands of the stated clerk 30 days before classis convenes, that is, by August 30, 2021. All delegates in need of lodging or transportation from the airport should notify the clerk of Crete’s consistory.

Rev. J. Engelsma, Stated Clerk

## Reminder

Remember that the *Standard Bearer* is published only once a month during the summer: June, July, and August.

## Announcements continued

### Lecture

Plan to attend a lecture by Prof. D. Engelsma on the topic, "Still Totally Depraved?" The lecture will be on Friday, July 30, 2021 at Fair Haven Church at 7:30 P.M. Fair Haven is located at 2900 Baldwin, Hudsonville, MI. This lecture will not be live streamed or recorded and is sponsored by Trinity PRC.

### Reformed Witness Hour

reformedwitnesshour.org

#### Rev. Carl Haak

July 4 When I Heard, I Wept and Prayed, Nehemiah 1  
July 11 So I Prayed and Said..., Nehemiah 2:1-10  
July 18 Come, Let Us Build, Nehemiah 2:11-20  
July 25 The People Had a Mind to Build, Nehemiah 3

### Wedding anniversary

With gratitude to God, we express congratulations to our parents and grandparents, **Randall and Debra Poortinga**, on the celebration of their 45th wedding anniversary. Psalm 48:14 "For this God is our God for ever and ever; he will be our guide even unto death."

Michael and Heidi Poortinga:

Trevor and Amber Poortinga,  
Reece and Carlie VanDyke,  
Dylan, Paityn, Kennedy, Sawyer

Aaron and Jennifer Lanting:

Aandon, Addison, Aliyah, Aubre,  
Alexandra

Nate and Rebecca Bol:

Gerrit, Karissa, Tabitha

Rick and Wendy Poortinga:

Chase, Jaden, Madigan, Rylan

Kenton and Lisa Kalsbeek:

Everett, Darren, Abigail, Anna,  
Connor

Michael and Amy Terpstra:

Travis, Rose, Baby (due Nov. 2021)  
Dyer, Indiana

# IGNITED BY THE WORD

## COMING SOON!

*Ignited by the Word* is a new children's magazine coming from the RFP, published quarterly. *Standard Bearer* subscribers will receive the first two issues free. Others who sign up will also receive these issues at no charge. To learn more, visit [ignitedbytheword.org](http://ignitedbytheword.org)

