

The Standard Bearer

A Reformed Semi-Monthly Magazine • April 1, 2010

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Insulting the Temple-Builder

At the last came two false witnesses, And said, This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days.

Matthew 26:60b, 61

It is that time of the year when our attention is directed to the suffering of Jesus Christ. The suffering in our text takes place on the night of His betrayal. Having been betrayed, Christ was arrested by the Sanhedrin, which was the highest Jewish tribunal, consisting of 71 members, with the high priest presiding. At the time of Christ the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem enjoyed a very high degree of independence. It not only sat in judgment in cases of civil jurisdiction according to Jewish law, but also in criminal cases. It could order arrests by its own officers of justice, sometimes with the help of the Roman soldiers. It was limited only to the extent that it did not have jurisdiction in cases that involved capital punishment. For this they needed the approval of the Roman governor.

From the history of the suffering and death of Jesus it is evident that the Jews did not intend to conduct a formal trial, but rather to put Him to death secretly, i.e., murder Him. This had been attempted before, but always failed because His hour had not yet come. In the beginning

of His ministry, when He preached in the synagogue in Nazareth, they that heard Him were filled with wrath “and rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong. But he passing through the midst of them went his way” (Luke 4:29, 30).

Moreover, they did not intend to put Him away on the feast day because they were afraid of the multitude that was gathering in Jerusalem for the Passover (Matt. 26:3-5).

The way of the Lord was quite different. Christ must not simply be killed, so that His body would be found somewhere later. No, He must be publicly executed, and die on the accursed tree. And it was exactly the purpose of the Lord that He should die during the feast of the Passover. This purpose was accomplished at that time through two means. First, through the raising of Lazarus. This miracle had been witnessed by many, and because of it many believed. This same thing caused the unbelieving Jews to become excited. “Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? For this man doeth many miracles. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation” (John 11:47, 48). At that time, on the advice of Caiaphas, they decided to kill Him.

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The Standard Bearer (ISSN 0362-4692) is a semi-monthly periodical, except monthly during June, July, and August, published by the Reformed Free Publishing Association, Inc.: 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

\$21.00 per year in the US, \$25.00 elsewhere

Advertising Policy

The Standard Bearer does not accept commercial advertising of any kind. Announcements of church and school events, anniversaries, obituaries, and sympathy resolutions will be placed for a \$10.00 fee. Announcements should be sent, with the \$10.00 fee, to: SB Announcements, 4949 Ivanrest Ave. SW, Grandville, MI 49418 (e-mail: doezema@prca.org). Deadline for announcements is one month prior to publication date.

Website for RFA: www.rfa.org

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The second thing that frustrated their plans to put Him away subtly was the dismissal of the traitor. Judas had covenanted with them to betray the Lord for thirty pieces of silver. The idea was that through this traitor they could put Christ away in secret. But this failed because at the last supper the Lord exposed Judas and then told him, "That thou doest do quickly." Therefore the Jews could not avoid conducting a formal trial to have Jesus publicly put to death on the accursed tree, and that too, during the feast of the Passover.

After His arrest, Christ was first led to Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas. No doubt Caiaphas, as president of the Sanhedrin, needed the time to gather as many members of the council as he could, for it was night. The entire trial was the confirmation of the words that Jesus had spoken shortly before: "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out" (John 12:31).

The trial was conducted during the night, which was illegal. Furthermore, there was no charge. Jesus was finally condemned to death because in answer to the high priest He confessed that He was the Christ, the Son of God. This was the simple truth, which could never be disproved by the Sanhedrin. Thus, the trial was the confirmation of and the testimony of the innocence of Jesus, while at the same time it constituted the condemnation of the Jewish nation through the Sanhedrin.

Nevertheless, at one moment of the trial, Jesus stood before the Sanhedrin as the temple-builder.

Two false witnesses came and falsely accused Jesus that He would destroy the temple and build it in three days. Negatively, according to the words of these false witnesses, Jesus stood before them as the temple destroyer. But Christ never made that statement. He said that they, the enemies, would destroy the temple, and that too, as it was in His body, and that in three days He would rebuild the temple. Therefore, positively, in His

own words, He stands there as the temple-builder. The simple fact is that man destroys and Christ builds the temple.

The meaning is plain. The temple is the house of God, where He lives with His people. It embodies the idea of God's eternal covenant. It is essentially the relation of most perfect and intimate fellowship and friendship. The real, eternal covenant of friendship and fellowship is in God Himself. On the basis of His triune life, three persons in one being, He lives a life of perfect covenant fellowship. God's covenant with man is but a revelation of God's own covenant life as the triune God. Such is essentially the house of God.

This was developed in history beginning in Paradise. Man was created in the image of God, a creaturely reflection of God Himself. Therefore, man was the friend of God and lived in most intimate

fellowship with his Creator. Paradise was the first house of God. Man sinned and fell away from God into darkness and death. The covenant, however, was immediately established in Christ. Christ was ordained from eternity to rebuild the temple on the ruins of sin and death, and to reestablish God's covenant in a far higher and more beautiful form than had ever been revealed in Paradise the first.

This was realized symbolically in the tabernacle and the temple, and finally and really established in Jesus Christ our Lord. The incarnation, the union of God and man, is the

most intimate fellowship of God and man in the highest sense of the word. The covenant was established in the blood of Christ, which He shed on the cross. Atonement had to be made for the rebellion and sin of man before the tie of friendship and fellowship could be realized again. The covenant was realized in the highest sense in the resurrection and ascension of Christ to the right hand of God as His covenant friend.

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That house is now established in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. Through Him Christ dwells in our hearts, regenerates us, giving us a new life, the life of God's covenant fellowship. He calls us by His Word, instills into our hearts living faith, cleanses us from sin and corruption, and perfects us so that with Him we may become the covenant friends of God forever. This is all now in principle, but will be perfectly realized when Christ returns and creates the new heaven and new earth where the tabernacle of God will forever be with men.

This temple-builder is now insulted. The Jews accused Him of saying that He would destroy the temple. It is evident that He did not and that it was they that through the ages had destroyed the temple and were now attempting to do the same by killing Him who was the temple-builder. The council of the Jews could not accuse Him of any sin. He could challenge them, and He did so by His very silence. Many false witnesses came, but no two could be found that agreed with each other. However, the charge that He would destroy the temple and build it in three days did not find favor in the eyes of the Sanhedrin.

This charge deeply hurt the Lord. Personally He was the Son of God, dwelling in the bosom of the Father, the Son of the everlasting love of God, who lived forever in most intimate fellowship with the Father and the Holy Spirit. Now accused of destroying the house of God? How absurd and how impossible!

This was also insulting to Him in the human nature. He is Immanuel, God of God in the human nature, in whom the most intimate union of God and man was established perfectly. He was in His own person the very representation and revelation of the temple of the living God. He had said, "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up" (Ps. 69:9; John 2:17). At that very moment, standing before the council, He was laying the foundation of the house of God. Soon He would do so in the shedding of His atoning blood. He would rebuild what the unbelieving Jews attempted to destroy. He is now being

accused of being a violator of God's covenant, of being an enemy of God and His people. How insulting!

We see that Christ, in response, held His peace. The purpose is plain. Christ knew, the accusers knew, and the council of the Jews knew that they were lying. Christ's very silence gave testimony to their lie. But the chief reason for His silence is that He stood there before the Jewish council in the stead of His people. We were given to Him by the Father—we, who are sinners in ourselves, the real temple-destroyers, who always violate the covenant of God. It is in our stead that Christ stood there, bearing the grievous insult that He destroyed the temple, and not only bearing that particular insult, but bearing all our sins upon His mighty shoulders. He stood there before the Sanhedrin and before

His Father in heaven as the obedient Servant of Jehovah who personally knew no sin, but who so represented His people that He stood as *the* sinner before the face of God. He stood before God and the Jewish council bearing the iniquity of all whom the Father had given Him, in order that He might rebuild the temple of God forever by satisfying the justice of God and by blotting out all our sins on the accursed tree.

Such was His task, on the cross and in the resurrection, a task that shall not be completed until all those whom the Father has given Him shall be gathered into one, and the tabernacle of God shall be with men forever. By His Holy Spirit He works in our hearts the covenant life of God. When that work is accomplished, and Christ calls that covenant life of God to our consciousness, so that we confess our iniquity in true, heartfelt sorrow before the face of God, and enter into perfect righteousness and everlasting life through the gate of the blood of Christ, then we will learn to know the covenant life, the covenant fellowship, the covenant love of God, so that we too love Him, and walk in newness of life in the midst of the world, to the glory of His name. ☮

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Sanctified Sarcasm

A contradiction in terms? There are those who are persuaded it is.

Understandably so.

The question arises not only when one considers what sarcasm is (an expression of mockery) and what it is used to accomplish (to hold up the views of another for ridicule), but also when you consider that the ungodly resort to it often, especially to give their estimation of Christianity and its practitioners. “Oh my, aren’t you holy! Better than the rest of us, I suppose! Well, you hypocrites, let me tell you about some of your wonderful, Christian friends!”

And they proceed to do just that.

Sad to say, all too often those associated with the Christian faith (not excluding ourselves) have given them ammunition enough.

And now for the Christian to resort to this approach? Reservations are expressed.

Why give editorial space to this topic at this time, you ask?

First, because a Bible Study society I lead had occasion recently to discuss the issue of sarcasm in connection with the apostle’s use of it in I Corinthians 4:8. There Paul takes to task leaders in the church who were too impressed with themselves. It is sarcasm in a toned-down form, but sarcasm for all that.

And I understand that the issue has been raised recently in other of our societies as well.

Second, we address the issue because over the years the use of sarcasm has not been unknown in the pages of the *SB*. Some have questioned its propriety.

And third, it strikes us that this time of year itself serves as an occasion to raise this topic, considering that the April 1 issue of the *SB* coincides with marking Good Friday (and Easter), and if there was any place where sarcasm came to the fore in the mouth of the ungodly, it was at the Cross. The Son of God was subjected to sarcasm in its most vehement and venomous form.

“He saved others [so they claim]; [and yet] himself he cannot save!” Explain that!

That from the apostate church, mockery in its bitterest form. Oh, what a ‘Savior’ indeed!

And the Roman soldiers joined in, kneeling before him with that crown of thorns on His head (sarcasm in a visual form) and with that limp reed in his hand, “Hail, King of the Jews!,” thereby killing two birds with one sarcasm, namely, the Jews, to have such an ‘exalted’ king, and the Christ Himself. Some King! My, aren’t we afraid!

So, in light of its malicious use by the ungodly, the question arises, can we as Christians make use of sarcasm? And in particular, does it

have a place on our pulpits and in the gospel ministry? In our public writings? If so, what?

We are convinced it does. In fact, our perusal of Scripture has convinced us not only that sarcasm is a form of address that is allowable to a ‘man of God,’ but also that there are occasions that shout for its judicious use, use that sanctifies it, if you please.

The best known biblical example, surely, is that of Elijah the Tishbite, who on Mt. Carmel mocked the priests of Baal with biting sarcasm as they in their frenzy cried aloud and cut themselves in order to ‘get the attention’ of Baal. “Oh, Baal, hear us!”

How Elijah mocked them, saying in effect, “Can’t you shout a little louder? Have you considered that perhaps this Baal of yours is out chasing someone, or taking a vacation someplace, or maybe he has just dozed off! Idol gods have a habit of doing that, I hear. Is that all the noise you can make to wake him?” (cf. I Kings 18:26ff.).

But Elijah is not alone in the use of ‘religious sarcasm.’ Jehovah God Himself is not ‘above’ using it on occasion. One such passage is Jeremiah 22:23. “O inhabitants of Lebanon, that makest thy nest in the cedars, how gracious shalt thou be when pangs come upon thee, the pain as of a woman in travail.”

Keep in mind that the *inhabitants of Lebanon* referred to were

Jews, members of Judah's aristocrat class, royalty, who, to escape Jerusalem's summer heat, were living sumptuously in the hills of Lebanon, carrying on like well-painted and sensuous women. And the poor of the nation had to support this lifestyle.

The LORD says, in effect, we will see just how gracious and attractive you feel when shortly in judgment I treat you like a woman nine months pregnant, with her feet swelled up, and I put you through convulsions like a woman racked with birth pangs. Oh, how gracious (attractive) to your band of lovers you will be then!

A passage that drips with sarcasm.

Another instance is found in Zechariah 11:12, 13. There reference is made to thirty pieces of silver, an amount Israel's priesthood carefully calculated to indicate what God's prophet (and word) was worth to them. According to Mosaic law, the price of a slave! It foreshadowed Israel's rejection of the coming Messiah, what Israel's priests later would pay Judas Iscariot for betraying Christ—thirty pieces of silver.

God instructed the prophet to cast it back to them in the potter's house (a place of broken pottery). And he adds words of sarcasm "...a goodly price that I was prised at [evaluated] of them." A goodly price indeed—worth no more than a slave!

And as pointed out above, its use in the New Testament was not foreign to the apostles either.

Clearly, Scripture demonstrates there is such a species as 'sanctified

sarcasm.' God Himself found occasion to use it, as did men of God.

Yet we are not suggesting that we resort to using sarcasm without great caution.

Sarcasm in the mouth of believers is to be reserved for special cases. It can easily be abused.

This is so because of the special implications of sarcasm. It implies a severe assessment of those about whom you are speaking. One is im-

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plying that one's time is too valuable to waste any more in talking to or reasoning with these people on some matter. That is why by sarcasm one says *just the opposite* of what one really means.

Thus God's word through Zechariah to Judah's corrupt priesthood, "...a goodly price that I was prised at [evaluated at] by them!"

In the context of biblical truth (which is our concern), use of sarcasm implies one has given up trying to reason with a person in a simple, direct manner. It would be a sheer waste of time. It is not that these wise 'fools' do not know what the truth is or that

their position is really indefensible. They do know. But they so dislike some element of truth that they would rather live in self-deception, *pretending* they do not 'see it,' than have to acknowledge that they, at least in this or that matter, are wrong after all. They are resolved to remain wedded to their deception come what may.

In other words, a basic dishonesty is involved.

By sarcasm one indicates that one sees through such men's shameless ploy. The time for discussing certain matters of truth with them to get them to acknowledge their error has past. They have deliberately buried truth and reason.

But adding to the aggravation of it all is that these 'wise fools' are committed to infecting others with their deception as well, and yet all the while they profess highest esteem for the historic apostolic faith.

An example? The Federal Vision men come to mind.

We have no compunction in using scathing sarcasm when referring to the Federal Vision men as they promote their views in the name of remaining Reformed, and 'faithful to the creeds.' For them to claim a love for the great Reformed creeds and that all they are doing is in the interests of developing the Reformed faith, while they teach their wicked 'justification by works doctrine' (along with baptismal-regeneration and a losable election), is unmitigated poppy-cock.

And they know it.

And we know they know it. These are men well schooled in the

creeds and the Reformers. We have no time for them. For those being led astray by these smooth-tongued deceivers, we have all kinds of time. But as for the deceivers themselves and their ilk we take the lying doctrines of their '30 pieces of silver' and cast them back at their feet like pieces of broken pottery. This is what their doctrines are worth.

Use of sarcasm implies, "Do not insult our intelligence. You know that what you are saying is simply misrepresentation and too ridiculous to present as truth. We will not play your game."

Quite an indictment, you say. You are right, which is why one resorts to sarcasm in spiritual matters only when another's 'persisted-in dishonesty' is transparent.

That said, it is our judgment that an important twofold restriction is to govern the use of sarcasm in and concerning Christ's church.

The use of sarcasm in the affairs of Christ's church is to be reserved for leaders (primarily preachers and theologians), those who in the face of knowledge willfully pervert truth and then try to convince others of their innocence and 'good intentions.' One refrains from its use towards those being influenced and led astray by these persuasive liars. With such we must exercise patience, seeking to persuade by reasoning based on Scripture and the creeds.

The scriptural examples referred to above demonstrate that restriction and rule. It was the leaders (priests and officebearers) that came under the guns of God's and the apostles' sarcasm. When it came to the misguided members of the congrega-

tions, prophets and apostles exercised great patience and restraint.

It is an axiom for officebearers that, when it comes to the members of the church, the sheep, we must never, never resort to sarcasm, no matter how exasperated we may feel. Patience must rule, with on-going instruction, in the hopes that Christ will open the eyes of the misguided and bring them around.

Once biting sarcasm has been used, there is little hope for reconciliation in the future. Use of sarcasm is a telling assessment of another's lack

When it comes to sanctified-sarcasm (holy mockery), few could hold a pen to the Reformers, those men of God.

of honesty and integrity.

In these days of great apostasy, theologians who are worthy objects of biting sarcasm, men willingly deaf to all reason and truth, are growing in number, sad to say.

Christ (and His truth) is, indeed, being betrayed in the house of his 'friends.' There comes a time when such 'friends' and their pious deceptions are to be treated with the contempt they deserve.

There is precedent for this is church history.

When it comes to sanctified-sarcasm (holy mockery), few could hold a pen to the Reformers, those men of God. Recently I came across this specimen from Calvin, words intended, according to Calvin, "*To Impose Silence On a Certain Scoundrel Named Antoine Cathelan*" (a defrocked monk responsible for stirring up trouble in a number of Protestant churches). What follows is one long sentence, abbreviated a bit:

Today many stupid dolts are so occupied with writing drivel that the learned will be ashamed to have anything published; yet only with great difficulty will one find anyone who excels a certain scoundrel named Antoine Cathelan...currently calling himself a lay priest, who nonetheless imagines he will make a name for himself...rashly spewing out all the errors that he can fabricate against us...and by getting some starving printer to corrupt the world with them for some smidgen of the booty.

"...by getting some starving printer to corrupt the world with [his errors]." What a phrase. Compared to such a 'master,' the best of us are but novices when it comes to sarcasm. Because we live in a different age, that is probably a good thing.

But even here, note well, Calvin was aiming his sarcasm at a would-be church leader, one who was knowingly misrepresenting the truth to mislead others. When it came to those who were being deceived and misled, Calvin was careful to use a more patient, long-suffering approach. ☺

Diaconal Conferences (1)

In treating the office of deacon, we examine yet the subject of diaconal conferences.

The term “diaconal conferences” can be used in at least two senses—a narrower and a broader. Members of Protestant Reformed Churches would more quickly understand the term in the narrower sense—to refer to occasional meetings sponsored by a particular diaconate, at which speakers give instruction and encouragement to past, present, or prospective deacons. Such conferences are held, albeit infrequently, in the Protestant Reformed Churches, especially in the Michigan area.

In the broader sense, the term is used to refer to an official organization of all diaconates in a classis or denomination, to promote cooperation among them. Diaconates of Protestant Reformed Churches have no such conference in this sense of the term.

In these final articles on deacons, our aim is to evaluate diaconal conferences in both senses, and encourage their use to the degree they can be of benefit to our deacons.

Underlying Principle: Diaconal Cooperation

Regarding the narrower and broader senses of the term “diaconal conferences,” we can say that one principle underlies them both: the need for diaconates in the same denomination to work together.

This principle finds expression in our Church Order, particularly in Article 26, which reads:

In places where others are devoting themselves to the care of the poor, the deacons shall seek a mutual understanding with them, to the end that the alms may all the better

be distributed among those who have the greatest need. Moreover, they shall make it possible for the poor to make use of institutions of mercy, and to that end they shall request the board of directors of such institutions to keep in close touch with them. It is also desirable that the diaconates assist and consult one another, especially in caring for the poor in such institutions.

We have previously explained this article in some detail.¹ Our purpose at the moment is to show that the concept of diaconal cooperation is embodied in our Church Order. After being led through a brief review of the principles of Reformed church government, we will see why this is significant.²

Two main principles of the Reformed system of church government are the autonomy of the local congregation, and the calling of local congregations to join together in a denomination with like-minded churches. By the “autonomy” of the local congregation is meant that each congregation of saints, with its three special offices, is itself a complete manifestation of the body of Christ, inherently able to govern its own affairs by itself, and to carry out the work that Christ assigned it (preaching the Word, administering the sacraments, exercising discipline, and caring for the poor). Although in itself a complete manifestation of Christ’s body, each congregation is obligated to join together in federation with other like-minded congregations, in order to manifest the unity of the body of Christ. Manifesting this unity, the churches meet together at classis and synod, each consistory giving these broader assemblies limited but binding authority to make decisions that pertain to the welfare of the churches in common, and to give assistance to any particular church

¹ See the *Standard Bearer*, vol. 81, pp. 476ff. and vol. 82, pp. 60ff.

² What I will say in this and the following paragraph, the reader can find explained in more detail on pages 2-4 of Prof. H. Hanko’s syllabus *Notes on the Church Order*, published by our seminary.

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that needs help. Cooperation in the work of the offices, in other words, is a fundamental tenet of Reformed church polity.

In this respect, Reformed church polity differs from the Congregational, or independent, form of church government. The congregational form of church government so strongly emphasizes the autonomy of the local congregation, that it views the congregational meeting as the broadest governing body, and does not have broader assemblies. The congregations are only loosely federated, and the decisions of the meetings of this federation are not binding on the churches.

Now the argument has been made that Reformed churches apply Reformed church polity properly to ministers and elders, in stipulating that they must come together at the meetings of classis and synod; but that with regard to our deacons, because we have no organized way for them to manifest cooperation with each other, we are in conflict with Reformed church polity. Specifically, Prof. William Heyns makes this argument. He notes

the incongruity of having in a Reformed Church system the Diaconate organized in a manner which is peculiar to the Independent system of the Congregational Churches. Although we repudiate the Independent system of the Congregationalists, our Diaconate occupies a position which is contrary to the Reformed, but in full harmony with the Independent system of Church Polity. Reformed Church Polity emphasizes next to the individuality of the local Churches their unity as one body, but the position of the Diaconate is of such a nature that it fits in only with a Church Polity that recognizes exclusively the independent existence of the local Churches.³

Heyns makes this statement in the context of arguing that deacons should be delegated along with ministers and elders to the broader assemblies. Whether deacons should be delegated as Heyns suggests, we hope to treat in our next article; for now the question is, do we properly

³ William Heyns, *Handbook for Elders and Deacons* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1928), p. 352.

apply the principles of Reformed church polity to the deacons?

My answer is that our Church Order in fact *does make provision* for diaconal cooperation. The presence of Article 26 in the Church Order demonstrates that Prof. Heyns' argument is not true *in principle*. This is the first reason why it is significant that this article is found in the Church Order.

The second reason why it is significant that this article is found in the Church Order is that it encourages deacons to do everything possible to manifest such cooperation. As worded, Article 26 speaks of particular ways in which deacons should manifest their cooperation. It might happen that a diaconate concludes that it need not cooperate with other diaconates, because it does not face the situations set forth in Article 26. But let the deacons work together with diaconates from other congregations in other ways too! This can only be good and beneficial! Prof. Heyns' argument is not true *in principle*; but it may well

be that he touches on a weakness of our diaconates in *practice*—that interaction and cooperation between our diaconates is relatively infrequent.

Evidences of Diaconal Cooperation

Even if not frequent, and even if not manifesting cooperation as fully as is desirable and possible, our diaconates do cooperate with each other.

One form in which they cooperate may not be readily evident to others. I refer to the fact that, in accordance with the principle expressed in Article 26, it may well be that diaconates work with each other with regard to particular cases of benevolence. How often this happens, the members of a congregation generally will never know, because the deacons' report to the congregation must report only generally regarding their labors.

As one evidence of diaconal cooperation with which we are familiar, I note that our diaconates are ready to assist each other with benevolence.

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From time to time, a diaconate that has a significant surplus in its benevolent fund makes this fact known to other diaconates, so that if any have a shortfall, their need can be met. Or a diaconate that has benevolent needs greater than its congregation can provide might ask the diaconates of sister churches for money.

This is real cooperation. This manifests that as congregations also, and not only as individuals, we show ourselves Christ-like, as exhorted to do in Philippians 2:4: “Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.” This is *Israel* caring for *Israel*—that is, the church of Christ everywhere showing its unity by caring for its poor every-

where. This is the church today taking to heart the words of the apostle to the Corinthians, as he taught them to gather alms for the saints at Jerusalem: “For I mean not that other men be eased, and ye be burdened: But by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want, that there may be equality: As it is written, He that had gathered much had nothing over; and he that had gathered little had no lack” (I Cor. 8:13-15).

A second way in which our diaconates evidently cooperate with each other is in gathering periodically for instruction and encouragement at a diaconal conference—used in the narrower sense of the term. What Peter DeJong says regarding diaconal conferences in the broader sense applies here as well: “These are held chiefly for mutual inspiration and encouragement.... At such meetings practical questions may and should be discussed as well as the basic Scriptural principles underlying the ministry of mercy in the churches.”⁴

Such meetings as I am now describing are of great benefit for deacons, as well as for other interested attendees. They give opportunity for systematic instruction regarding various aspects of the office of deacon. At these meetings deacons can discuss various issues and concerns that they face in common, and share ideas regarding how

⁴ Peter Y. DeJong, *The Ministry of Mercy for Today* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1963), p. 230.

best to address these matters. And newer as well as seasoned deacons can benefit from the advice and wisdom of others. Considering that our practice in most churches is to replace one third of our deacons annually, incoming deacons will be faced with issues and questions that some

who are no longer in office have faced before. Even if a particular diaconate is made up of seasoned men, it can still benefit from the input of others. The inspired Scriptures speak of the benefit of “a multitude of counsellors” (Prov. 11:14; 24:6). And if this is of benefit for larger diaconates, think of the benefit for diaconates of smaller churches, in which perhaps one half or the whole of the diaconate

is replaced at a time!

In the ways mentioned above, it is evident that our deacons do cooperate.

Encouragement to More Cooperation

Yet I envision benefit to our diaconates if they would do more in the area of cooperation. Consider that these conferences in the narrower sense are held rather infrequently, and then only where a group of churches is found. They have been virtually non-existent among our Western churches. And consider that no organized system exists to foster such cooperation.

I do not point this out to fault our deacons personally. They are faithful and godly men who are devoted to their work. Their work takes time—time for meetings, time for committee visits, time away from home. More diaconal cooperation will take more time—and as stewards of the time God gives us, we must evaluate whether we are using it wisely. Even when we would be busy in kingdom causes, we must be sure that we are not neglecting other important responsibilities that also take time.

It seems to me, though, that an organized system to foster cooperation among diaconates of the Protestant Reformed Churches would be of great benefit. Our next article will focus, then, on diaconal cooperation in the broader sense—a geographical, classical, or denominational organization that has as its purpose to help deacons work together. ☞

...newer as well as seasoned deacons can benefit from the advice and wisdom of others.

Ideas Have Consequences: Going Green (2)

And of the children of Issachar, which were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do; the heads of them were two hundred; and all their brethren were at their commandment.

| Chronicles 12:31

Ideas have consequences! Bad ideas have bad consequences!

It is our intent in this article to discuss *some* of the bad consequences of the ideas of the three radical environmental groups we discussed in our former article (The Green Party, The Deep Ecology Movement, The Animal Rights Movement). Although the three groups have their differences in emphasis and methods, all three are justly condemned by Romans 1:25 for what they have in common, viz., they "...changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator..." Furthermore, Romans 1:28 announces severe consequences for those who hold to these false beliefs: "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient..." The specific consequences of being given over to a reprobate mind are recorded in verses 29-32.

It would be one thing if the perpetrators of these ideas were the only ones who had to experience the consequences of their ideas. The problem is that, to the degree that their ideas are foisted on and sometimes accepted by society in general, the rest of society has to live with those consequences. And in particular, modern-day Issachar experiences the brunt of those consequences.

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Previous article in this series: March 1, 2010, p. 257.

Consequences of the Idea of Overpopulation

Fears of overpopulation are not unique to the modern radical environmentalist. Those ideas go back at least as far as the pharaoh in the Old Testament who feared for Egypt if the Hebrews continued to have children at the rate they were. In more modern times, Thomas Malthus had his theories of how population growth would outpace food production, with the expected result that millions would die of starvation. Those fears proved to be unfounded; nevertheless, the same fears continue still today.

One consequence of these fears for the People's Republic of China has been a "one-child policy," which has resulted in untold grief for millions of their citizens, in particular those who are Christians. Furthermore, China is currently experiencing an unintended detrimental consequence: the significant disparity between their male and female populations. Since only one child is allowed, parents in China are opting for boys and therefore aborting more girls than boys. The result is a population that consists of 120 boys for every 100 girls. So what does a country do with millions of restless young men who have no hope of finding a mate?

The countries of Europe have their own consequences of past policies that have encouraged the birth of fewer children. At present, even though some of the countries are providing tax incentives for its citizens to encourage them to have more children, they continue to reproduce at a slower pace than their death rate. Europe's average fertility rate is 1.38, while a rate of 2.1 is necessary for a population to maintain itself. If present trends continue, the result will be a European population that will shrink from 728 million to 207 million by the end of the century. Furthermore, to fill the continuing population void, a great influx of immigrants from the Middle East and North Africa is being received. This trend, along with a high birthrate among European Muslims, indicates,

according to some demographers, that by the year 2040 France and the Netherlands will have Muslim majorities. “Unless governments throughout the continent adopt effective assimilation policies and the fertility rates increase dramatically, population demographics may accomplish what the Muslim army on the field of Tours could not—the Islamic conquest of Europe.”¹ Unpleasant, to say the least, would be the thought of one’s descendants living under Moslem Shariah law.

The poor in sub-Saharan Africa and other places have suffered their own consequences as a result of the overpopulation concern.

In the book *Toxic Terror*, Charles Wursta, chief scientist for the US Environment Defense Fund, speaking of how the worldwide ban on DDT, which had virtually wiped out malaria as a global killer, was likely to lead to millions of deaths, replied: “This is as good a way to get rid of them as any.” Even though scientists had *proved* DDT was not carcinogenic, the environmentalists forced a ban through anyway. It is conservatively estimated that over the next four decades between 10 and 30 million people, mostly children in sub-Saharan Africa, died from malaria as a direct consequence of the ban.²

Way back in November of 1986, Prince Phillip, Duke of Edinburgh, expressed the same deadly sentiments as Wursta when he said: “If I were reincarnated, I would wish to be returned to Earth as a killer virus to lower population levels.”³ Even the liberal *New York Times* finds the consequences of these sentiments hard to swallow. In an article titled “*New York Times* Calls for Return of DDT,” James Taylor reveals the reasons for the *Times*’ concerns. One is the fact that, due to limited use of DDT, one in every 20 children dies in sub-Sahara Africa, and second, malaria and other previously defeated diseases are returning to the U.S. in the absence of DDT spraying.⁴

Of more concern to modern-day Issachar is the recurring theme of radical environmental groups and others that the best way to slow climate change is to have fewer

children. A London School of Economics study calls humans “pollutants” that governments should focus on to fight climate change. In fact, their study claims that for each non-birth in the U.S. the earth will be spared 1,644 tons of carbon. Based on this data “Oregon State researchers concluded that child-bearing was one of the most fateful environmental decisions in anyone’s life.”⁵

While it is true that *these* researches are supposedly “emphatic that they do not want people to be forced not to have children,” *others* have radically different ideas about that. In the *Yale Human Rights and Development Law Journal*, Carter J. Dillard claims the U.S. constitution, international law, and even natural law do not provide people with the right to procreate as they wish. Rather, he writes, “...these authorities merely provide for a right to continue the species, a right to perpetuate the race and have offspring, and the right to simply found a family....”⁶ Dillard then goes on to say that this procreative right is fulfilled by “a single act of procreation” or “procreation for optimized societal replacement.” In other words, Dillard’s view neatly matches China’s one-child policy.

Considering these concerns for population control to save the planet, one might wonder how long it will be before homosexuals will be honored for their earth-saving lifestyle. Think of it, by giving themselves over to homosexuality, they will have no offspring to leave a carbon footprint, and their abbreviated life (20 years less on average) will lessen significantly their own carbon footprint. We can be sure radical environmentalists will view them as “Martyrs for the Planet.”

Consequences of the Ideas of Animal Rights

But there is an even less obtrusive footprint on our planet, and radical environmentalists are at great pains to exalt its perpetrator: the animal. In fact, according to the high priests of radical environmentalism, whose central sermon theme is Darwinian evolution, humans have a close kinship to the animal. If we would just behave more like the animals, the planet would not only survive but likely even thrive.

¹ <http://www.gwias.com/globe/archive/000072.html>

² Peter C. Glover, “Environmentalism: The New Religion & its False Prophets,” *Christian Renewal*, August 1, 2007: 3.

³ Fred Gielow, *You Don’t Say* (Boca Raton, Florida: Freedom Books, 1999), 181.

⁴ James M. Taylor, “*New York Times* Calls for Return of DDT,” *Environment & Climate News*, Feb. 2003.

⁵ David A. Fahrenthold, “Can birth control stop global warming?” *The Grand Rapids Press*, Nov. 27, 2009: A10.

⁶ Carter J. Dillard, “Rethinking the Procreative Right,” *Yale Human Rights and Development Law Journal* 10 (2007): 1.

That the radical environmentalists have been successful in their elevation of the status of animals is abundantly evident. Take for example the Great Ape Project. Those promoting this project "...demand the extension of the community of equals to include all great apes: human beings, chimpanzees, bonobos, gorillas and orangutans. The community of equals is the moral community within which we accept certain basic moral principles or rights as governing our relations with each other and enforceable at law."⁷ The success of this project and the acceptance of the thinking behind it is evident from its increasing receptivity in many of the countries of the West.

Closer to home are their successes in the U.S. neighbor to the north. In 2003, animal rights activists were able to push their agenda before the Canadian senate in Bill C15B: a bill that defined an animal as "a vertebrate, other than a human being, and any other animal that has a capacity to feel pain." Responding to this attempt of the animal rights activists, Hermina Dykxhoorn wrote in *Christian Renewal*:

According to this definition, a human being is an animal. This legislation removes the "cruelty to animals" section from Section XI of the Criminal Code and in so doing the Government raises the status of animals from human property to a category of their own that will give them human style "rights" apart from their owners....

The Bill also provides that anyone who kills or causes injury or pain to an animal will be subject to a maximum penalty of five years imprisonment. It is beyond irony that animals will have more protection under this law than unborn human beings who have no protection whatsoever.... Animal rights activists...hold a higher view of animals than they do of human babies.⁸

While they were unsuccessful in getting C15B passed at the time, Canadian animal activists continue to press the issue. And it would appear that science is on their side, at least if Darwinian evolution is the accepted dogma. In the words of Ingrid Newkirk, founder and director of PETA, it works out this way, "A rat is a pig is a dog is a boy."⁹

While obscuring the differences between humans

and animals may result in better treatment of animals, just as likely is the consequence of worse treatment for humans. As for Princeton ethicist Peter Singer, he argues that whatever is done to animals can properly also be done to humans. For example, if animals could be "put down" for various practical reasons, why not humans? In fact, in Singer's view, it would be immoral to waste money to maintain the life of a severely brain-damaged infant while at the same time willingly killing adult chimpanzees, dogs, pigs, and many other species. In the words of Singer, those animals "far surpass the brain-damaged infant in their ability to relate to others, act independently, be self-aware, and any other capacity that could reasonably be said to give value to life."¹⁰

Does that sound familiar? Go back and reread the ideas of many of the German philosophers and eugenicists of the late 1800s and early 1900s who also found the basis for their ideas in Darwinian evolution. Compare their ideas to those of Singer and discover that Singer is simply a twenty-first century echo of their thinking. Max von Gruber provides a sample to illustrate the point. He wrote in 1909:

The never-ceasing struggle is, according to him (Darwin), not useless. It constantly clears away the malformed, the weak, and the inferior among the generations and thus secures the future for the fit. Thus only through the inexorable extermination of the negative variants does it provide living space for the strong and its strong offspring, and it keeps the species healthy, strong and able to live.¹¹

A few years later these ideas would find fertile soil in the Nazi mind, as Richard Weikart makes clear in his book *From Darwin to Hitler*:

Indeed Nazi barbarism was motivated by an ethic that prided itself on being scientific. The evolutionary process became the arbiter of all morality. Whatever promoted the evolutionary progress of humanity was deemed good, and whatever hindered biological improvement was considered morally bad. Multitudes must perish in this Malthusian struggle anyway, they reasoned, so why not improve humanity by speeding up the destruction of the

⁷ <http://www.greatapeproject.org/declaration.php>

⁸ Hermina Dykxhoorn, "ANIMAL RIGHTS and human Laws," *Christian Renewal*, March 10, 2003.

⁹ Gielow, 81.

¹⁰ Peter Singer, *Animal Liberation* (New York: Avon, 1977), 19.

¹¹ Max von Gruber, "Vererbung, Auslese and Hygiene," *Deutsche Medizinische Wochenschrift* (1909): 35.

disabled and the inferior races? According to this logic, the extermination of individuals and races deemed inferior and “unfit” was not only morally justified, but indeed, morally praiseworthy. Thus Hitler—and many other Germans—perpetuated one of the most evil programs the world has ever witnessed under the delusion that Darwinism could help us discover how to make the world better.¹²

It should not be surprising that the Nazis did what they did once they had accepted the idea of Darwinian evolution and the logical consequence as expounded by German philosophers. The only question they needed to answer was: who are the malformed, the weak, and the inferior? Once that was determined, the rest was easy. For Peter Singer and his disciples it is the same: the science of Darwinian evolution is firm. The only question is, who should be exterminated? Singer and his followers have already given their answer to that question. They include the old, handicapped, pre-born, and post-born (until they are self-aware). We can only wonder who will be added to the list.

However, Scripture suggests the *exterminators* will suffer something even worse, that is, being given over to living the life of an animal. The biblical example of Nebuchadnezzar should serve as an ample warning of the consequence for those who refuse to acknowledge “that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men” (Dan. 4:25). Little wonder that God *gave* Nebuchadnezzar and *gives* modern Darwinists over to the logical consequences of their ideas: if man is just an animal as he claims, why should he not behave like one? If man will stoop so low as to reject his God-honored place as king in the creation, is God not just in condemning man to live, and die, with the consequences of his unbelief?

The pop culture demonstrates the sad progression in their expressions of unbelief: in the 60s they sang, “Hey, hey, we’re the monkeys.” Later, the Bloodhound Gang bellowed, “You and me baby ain’t nothing but mammals; so let’s do it like they do on the Discovery Channel.” Today’s Rap is carrying our culture even further into the abyss with their unprintably explicit and vile lyrics. Understanding this, would modern-day Issachar be shocked or even surprised if the “vile affections” that Romans 1 says they will be given over to included bestiality and its

¹² Richard Weikart, *From Darwin to Hitler* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 227.

legalization in the future? As Nebuchadnezzar learned, God is not mocked!

Consequences for Not “Going Green”

The questioning and exposure of these self-destructive ideas also have their consequences. Those who would dare to suggest the prevailing “green” wisdom is merely a false worldview that worships the creature rather than the Creator are more and more marginalized and even openly attacked. A taste of that is expressed in *Time* magazine’s 1988 “Planet of the Year” issue:

Humanity’s current predatory relationship with nature reflects a man-centered worldview that has evolved over the ages.... In many pagan societies, the earth was seen as mother, a fertile giver of life. Morals were subordinate to nature. The Judeo-Christian tradition introduced a radically different concept. The idea of dominion (engendered in the book of Genesis) could be interpreted as an invitation to use nature as a convenience. Thus, the spread of Christianity, which is generally considered to have paved the way for the development of technology, may at the same time have carried the seeds of the wonton exploitation of nature that often accompanied technical progress.¹³

These same sentiments were expressed, only in much stronger language, by Peter Singer in his 1975 book *Animal Liberation*: “It can no longer be maintained by anyone but a religious fanatic that man is the darling of the whole universe, or that other animals were created to provide us with food, or that we have divine authority over them, and divine permission to kill them.”

If the thinking of Singer and others with his worldview prevails, it would not be out of the question that in the future Christians with courage enough to speak out against it be tried for hate crimes against the planet. As such, they would fit the Darwinian labels of “inferior and unfit,” by virtue of which their extermination would not only be morally justified, but even praiseworthy.

Is modern-day Issachar prepared for this challenge? 

¹³ <http://www.time.com/time/printout/0,8816,956627,00.html>.

The High Calling of Husbands to Love Their Wives (1)

My intention for some time has been to write a short series of articles for this rubric in the *Standard Bearer* on the role of the members of the covenant Christian family: husbands, wives, and children. This subject has been addressed on several occasions before in the *Standard Bearer* in the last several years, but it is one that is of such great importance that we need to be reminded of it. We as pastors need to be studying subjects like these often and giving instruction and encouragement to the members of the church for the good of their marriages and their covenant families. Recently I have again read a couple of books that have stirred up fresh ideas. One of the excellent books to which I am indebted for many of the thoughts in this article is the book by B.M. Palmer, *The Family*.¹

The primary calling of the husband is to love his God-given wife. The wife's calling is to be subject to her husband. This requires sacrifice on her part, and godly humility for both husband and wife. God has made man in marriage to be the head of his wife. This order is not merely a matter of culture or the tradition of the times. It is the good and wise order that God has ordained for marriage for all time, even for our modern age, in which we witness dramatic changes of philosophy concerning marriage. Many of these changes are very evil and destructive to the blessed order God created for the institution of marriage.

The calling of the wife is not an easy one. She must be inspired and encouraged to perform this calling through the love of God and the love of her husband. A godly wife is a gift of God. "Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good

thing, and obtaineth favor with God" (Prov. 18:22). The godly husband must cherish this precious gift of God and treat his God-given wife with deepest respect and love as heir together with him of the grace of life.

The headship of the husband implies that he must rule over her. There are not two heads in marriage but only one. In this respect there is not a relationship of equality in marriage. As her head the husband is responsible for caring for his wife, leading her with discretion, providing for her, and protecting her. The role of the husband as given by God is one of great responsibility. In marriage he is entrusted with the spiritual welfare of his wife. He must care for her, provide for her, and protect her. He must live with his wife in happiness and peace and unity.

It is noteworthy that nowhere in Scripture do we find an actual command of God to the husband that he rule over his wife. The oft repeated command to husbands is rather: "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it" (Eph. 5:25). Love is the primary calling of the husband. His rule over his wife must be in love. Though this may sound contradictory, by love the husband serves his wife, for her good. In love the husband must serve the welfare of his marriage and family. He does not serve merely himself. The position that God gave to the husband gives him no reason for boasting pride over his wife. When the husband rules his wife as a dictator or tyrant he violates his calling to rule over her. The husband may not be harsh and cruel, or even unsympathetic and uncaring, in his behavior when he rules over his wife. He must rule his wife in tenderness and affection, with compassion and with humility, treating her as a fellow image-bearer of God, in honor and appreciation for the role God has given to her in marriage.

It is by love that the young man chooses a particular young woman to be his wife. By love he seeks to attract her to become his wife and show himself worthy of being

¹ *The Family*, by B.M. Palmer, Sprinkle Publications, Harrisonburg, Virginia. 1981.

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her husband. He has no right to compel her or entice her out of any other motive. She must give herself voluntarily to being his wife. For the wife to leave her father and mother and be joined to her husband, she must be confident of the love of her future husband.

This love from the beginning must be much deeper than mere physical attraction or the husband's selfish interest. He may not be motivated by pride or ambition to exalt himself over another human being or somehow to conquer her person. Even after marriage she maintains her personal identity. His purpose in gaining a wife may not be merely the satisfaction of sexual passion. From the beginning, the love of a young man for his future wife must be with the conscious and determined purpose to do her only good and not evil all the days of their married life. There are risks and sacrifices involved for the young woman that she can make only by the faith and trust she places in the man who has asked her to marry him. This trust must not be betrayed later in marriage.

The marriage bond is an intimate union in which two become one flesh. Marriage is at heart a complete union and communion of life of a man and wife. The husband in marriage is called to nourish and cherish his God-given wife in the years of married life.

Where love rules, marriage brings great joy and happiness and satisfaction to those who live in this state. Love must flourish over the days and months and years that husband and wife live together. Because of the awful reality of sin, every relationship among men is in grave danger of being destroyed by sinful enmity, self-seeking, and strife. Exactly because marriage is the most intimate of human relationships among men, there is the greatest danger of hurt and damage in marriage because of sin. The husband must, in love, seek to prevent this damage from happening. A marriage where love has died is a wretched marriage. It is a marriage where the heart of that marriage has died. It is a marriage where the joy and blessedness that God intended for marriage is tragically absent and where coldness and bitterness and strife will be the rule. When a husband in marriage no longer truly loves his God-given wife, he fails to give to her the most fundamental blessing of marriage that God commands him to give to her.

True love is the ongoing happiness of Christian marriage, the real joy and peace and fulfillment and security

of married life. We live in a world of enmity, confusion, war, and unrest. Christian marriage must by the grace of God be the haven for Christians and for the covenant family. We live in a sinful world, a world of many corruptions and temptations, where evil passions destroy many things. These all pose very grave dangers to the true happiness and peace of our marriages. The calling of the husband includes taking the lead in overcoming the conflicts that arise because of his sinful nature and the sinful nature of his wife, which are an ever present reality and threat to the spiritual well-being and peace of the marriage bond. Love in marriage requires constant forgiveness and bearing with one another's weaknesses. We will make only small progress in overcoming these weaknesses in the years of our married life.

The husband must be faithful to his wife, never forsaking her or neglecting her or leaving her for another. Love must constrain him to be faithful over the years of married life. Unfaithfulness in marriage often is the result of patterns of sinful behavior that develop over time, and of prolonged conflicts that are never properly resolved. The husband may not just give up on his wife and seek someone else with whom he imagines life will be so much easier and more pleasant. Faithfulness involves constant confession of our faults to one another, forgiveness and restoration and reconciliation. Difficult times and experiences in life that drive husband and wife apart must be overcome. Trials and hardships in life must be borne together by husband and wife, and they strengthen their relationship in marriage.

Marriage is intended by God to be a relationship of intimate communion, fellowship, and friendship between a man and a woman. The atmosphere in which this relationship thrives is that of love. The husband must continually assure his wife of the love that he has for her—even as God repeatedly tells His people of His love for them and demonstrates that love daily in His care for and protection of His people. In this, God shows us the tenderness of His compassion and the greatness of His love. The husband must surround his wife with deeds and acts of kindness and goodness and assurances of his love for her. In this atmosphere in marriage, by the grace of God, mutual appreciation between husband and wife will continue to grow deeper and richer over the years.

... to be continued. 

Not a Hoof Left Behind

Reformed Witness Hour
A distinctively Reformed radio ministry,
proclaiming the truth of the
sovereignty of God.

The controversy between Jehovah the living God, and Pharaoh king of Egypt, is recorded in the Bible to show the power of God to save His people and to redeem them from *all* their sins. The apostle Paul, in Romans 9:17, when speaking of the sovereign, almighty predestination of God, that is, God's eternal determination of who will be saved and who will not be saved, shows from the life of Pharaoh that this is accomplished by the mighty will of God: "For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth."

Pharaoh, king of Egypt, was an absolute monarch. He hardened his heart and set himself to oppose the will of God to redeem His people Israel out of the yoke of bondage. And God, by raining destruction upon Pharaoh, showed that His purposes shall stand and that He will do all His good pleasure.

Remember with me that God had sent His people Israel into Egypt in order that they might multiply into a great and mighty nation. After Joseph died, a new Pharaoh arose who did not know Joseph. Fearing the people of Israel, he began to oppress them and to make their lives bitter with bondage and slavery. With mortar and brick, and under the lash, they served Pharaoh as slaves until, at last, the cry of God's people went up to heaven, and God laid bare His arm and brought all the seed of Jacob out of the house of bondage.

To do so, He raised up Moses and sent him to Pharaoh with the words, "Thus saith Jehovah, God of Israel, Let My people go that they may serve Me." Pharaoh scorned God's word and hardened his heart. He

responded to Moses: "Who is the Lord that I should obey him?" And then God, through the hand of Moses, sent plagues, one after another, upon the land of Egypt. Water turned to blood; frogs; lice; boils; hail. In the midst of these plagues Pharaoh, seeing the destruction visited upon his land, thought he could dicker with God. He says to Moses: "All right, you may go. But not very far away." "No," responds Moses, "we must go into the wilderness." Then Pharaoh says, "Well, you may go into the wilderness, but only the men, not the children and the wives." To which Moses responds: "No, we go all." The Lord rains more plagues upon Egypt: locust and darkness. Then Pharaoh says to Moses, "You may go; you may go with your wives and your little ones. But your flocks and your herds, they shall be stayed" (cf. Ex. 10:24). To which Moses responds: "No, our cattle also shall go with us" (Ex. 10:26). "There shall not an hoof be left behind."

Now, I trust that you see the significance. The significance is that the redemption that God gives to His children, the redemption of His church, is a complete and full redemption. When at last Israel was taken out of Egypt, all that pertained to Israel—the sick and the aged, the weak, the children, the cattle, the sheep—all of it came out of Egypt. Not a hoof was left behind. Likewise, all that are given to Jesus Christ, every one of them of whom Christ could speak in John 6 (all that the Father hath given Me), of whom He could speak in Hebrews 2:9 (I and the children whom the Lord hath given Me)—He has redeemed all of them. And He has redeemed them completely. He will keep and sanctify them so that they might serve Him. Christ will have *all* whom He died to purchase. All whom He bought with His blood upon Calvary—not a fraction of it will be lost. Those for whom He laid down His life shall be saved. Not a hoof shall be left behind.

As I said, Pharaoh in his hardened heart tried to negotiate Israel's release. If he could not hold back a part

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of the people, then perhaps he could hold back something that belonged to them. And make no mistake, Pharaoh is looking for a lever to get Israel back. But God's word is, "All will come out." For redemption, the purchase out of slavery, must be full, or it is not redemption at all. If anything is left behind, then it is not redeemed. Nothing can be left behind. Not a hoof of the smallest little lamb. Nothing of God's people belongs to Egypt. For God has called it all out. And by the power of His hand, He shall bring it all out.

What a marvelous picture of our redemption in Jesus Christ. The cross of Calvary is this: All that Jesus suffered to obtain shall be obtained. All that He bled to redeem shall be redeemed. All that He went to the cross to save shall be saved.

There is a teaching called "universal redemption." That teaching says that Jesus died for all men and women head for head. And yet, they are not really redeemed—unless they believe. Many for whom He died are left behind in the Egypt of unbelief and the slavery of sin. This idea of universal redemption dishonors the blood of Jesus Christ and would rob the blood of Jesus Christ and the cross of their power to save. This idea presents a disappointed Christ, a Christ who had a great purpose and grand design but could not accomplish them. This presents a frustrated cross. Christ then poured out His blood on the ground as water in vain.

The Bible teaches no such thing. Not a hoof of all His purchased flock shall be left behind. All, all who were included in the body of God's elect, all who were given to the Son from all eternity by the decree of God, all for whom He was nailed to the tree, *shall be brought out* by His redemption from sin and death. Christ's design in His dying cannot be frustrated. Not a single drop of His blood was shed in vain. All whom He came to save He saves. For He not only shed His blood for them, but by His Holy Spirit He shall renew them and bring them to Himself by mighty and, yes, irresistible grace.

Think of it. Think of the picture of redemption given in this text. The Lord's flock—and not a hoof is left behind. The great Shepherd walks in the front of His church and people—and not one for whom He died is absent. That certainly means that all of God's elect whom He loved eternally and gave to Christ to redeem shall be redeemed. They shall be redeemed because of the love

and faithfulness and the power and grace of God. Not a hoof shall be left behind.

Suppose your heart today has become overwhelmed. You cannot keep yourself up. The former blessedness of faith has escaped you. The way is dark and lonely. You feel isolated. You are despondent, desperate, and hopeless. Will your Savior leave you behind? No, not so much as a hoof shall be left behind. He will save you.

Suppose you shamefully have fallen into sin, horrible sin, and grief rolls over your heart. You have erred. You have submitted to the power of temptation. You have sinned repeatedly. Will the enemy, the devil, be able to say concerning you that Jesus saved the strong ones in the church but He could not keep the weak? That He suffered to save you but you shall perish? No, He shall bring you to Himself through repentance.

Suppose you are a parent and you have given birth to a newborn little lamb of the fold. Your child is feeble and sickly. And soon your little child dies. Will Jesus lose one of the little ones entrusted to Him of His Father's grace? No! To believe that Jesus would leave one hoof behind Him is to impugn His grace and His power. On the basis of His blood, none of the flock shall be left behind.

And if Satan were to say to Him today, "Take the best of the flock, the fattest of the flock. But what do you want with that diseased one over there, that shriveled one over here, that ornery one over there? What do you want to have those sheep for? They're nothing but trouble." The Lord says to Satan, "Stand back. All that the Father giveth to Me shall come to Me. And they shall in no wise be cast out."

The redemption of Jesus Christ is complete. And all that pertains to us is redeemed. All that our sins have thrown away in foolishness has been redeemed to us and restored. We lost divine fellowship. We chose darkness. We lost the right of sonship. We cast away the happiness and joy found at God's right hand. But Christ has redeemed us. And all that belongs to us in God's grace shall be ours—fellowship and favor, joy in God, and adoption as children. We brought upon ourselves ruin, but Christ has brought life and immortality to light.

There was a purpose for this full redemption. There was a reason why nothing could be left behind. Moses says to Pharaoh in Exodus 10:26, "Our cattle also shall go with us; there shall not an hoof be left behind; for thereof

must we take to serve the LORD our God; and we know not with what we must serve the LORD, until we come thither." Moses is saying that there must be a full redemption of Israel in order that there might be a full service of their God. Israel must leave with all her flocks and herds because she must be ready to serve the Lord completely, in whatever way He leads.

Now hear the Word of God: Our redemption was full in order that our service might be complete, in order that we might now serve the Lord with mind and heart and soul, so that we might serve Him as His possessions. God says to us, in the redemption that is in Jesus Christ, "I am not like a shareholder in your life. I did not take over ninety percent of stock in you so that I have a controlling interest in your life. I have not given My Son's blood in order that I will go halves with the devil—half for the devil and half for Me. I have not taken *most* of what pertains to you out of the dominion of sin, most of your time—say from Saturday morning to Sunday evening—but the rest is yours. I am satisfied with redeeming only part of your time and part of your life." Oh, no! Not a hoof is left behind. Why? Because we shall serve God completely and entirely. All must be redeemed so that we might serve with our all. We know not, says Moses, what the Lord shall bring us to from this point thither. We must be prepared.

As a redeemed child of God, you no longer belong to Egypt. You do not belong to yourself or to the world, to serve your own lust. But now, being made free from sin, ye are the servants of God to obey Him (Rom. 6). He may require of you service now. And in the future He may require of you more difficult service, a service contrary to your will. He may send you upon a path that you do not know about today. And remember, you are redeemed completely so that you might serve the Lord entirely. Do not say, "I am redeemed in the blood of the Lamb, His child and forever I am," and then, when the first appeal is made to serve your lust, go headlong after it. Do not do that! Then you make a mockery of His redemption.

There are many people who imagine that they can divide their life into parts. Portions of their life can stay with Pharaoh in the land of Egypt. They think that, though purchased with Jesus' precious blood, they may leave parts of their life in Egypt to serve the monarch of

this world, while the rest can go out and serve the Lord.

That is contrary to Scripture. I Thessalonians 5:23: "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly [completely]; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." No, the redemption of Jesus Christ is not so that we can have our right hand in God's service and our left hand employed in the dungeons of hell. The purpose of our redemption is not that we are one person now on Sunday and another person tomorrow in the world when we are before our peers and on the job. The purpose of our redemption is that we might be entirely His. A full redemption—for a complete service.

Do not content yourself, as a Christian, with parts of your life in the service of the Lord. Do not comfort yourself by saying, "Well, a good portion of my heart is devoted to the Lord. But there is this one vice that I want to spare, just one sin that I want to excuse. I want to live in it. I want to enjoy it. I want it to stay in Egypt."

No, the Word of God says, "Awake to righteousness!" "I have redeemed you," says the Savior, "in order that now you might serve God." No, we do not do that perfectly. We do that with the burdens of our sins upon us. But the Lord calls us to live unto Him entirely, with heart and mind, will and soul.

We need to hear that our salvation is complete in Christ. We need to know that our sins were paid for upon the cross. We need to know that all those who were given to Jesus Christ of the Father were redeemed. We need to go forth in the assurance of our victory in Jesus Christ. For He has purchased our salvation. He has brought us out of Egypt. Nothing shall be left behind.

And one day all of God's people, weak and weary, burdened with sin, struggling, cast down often but not forsaken, will come with joy and singing. We shall follow our great Moses, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Shepherd and the Savior of the flock. We shall follow Him in that great day of days through the gates of the new Jerusalem. And as we pass through those gates, we will hear Him say, "Father, of all those whom Thou hast given to Me I have lost none. The lion did not devour even one. The cold did not claim even one. I have brought them all out of Egypt safely to enter into the eternal Canaan of rest. Not a hoof is left behind." 

Heaven Misplaced: Christ's Kingdom on Earth, by Douglas Wilson. Moscow, ID: Canon Press, 2008. Pp. 136. \$19.00 (cloth). Reviewed by David J. Engelsma.

In the form of “lyrical theology”—a “theology couched in poetry, hymns and songs, and liturgy,” the author tells us (11)—Douglas Wilson promotes the standard Christian Reconstruction postmillennial doctrine of the earthly future. I speak of “earthly future” rather than “last things,” because for Wilson and the Christian Reconstructionists the “last things” are past. They happened in the days leading up to and including the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70.

Wilson expresses the optimism of postmillennialism quite un-lyrically and dogmatically:

This world, the one we live in *now*, will be put to rights, *before* the Second Coming, *before* the end of all things. The only enemy not destroyed through the advance of the gospel will be death itself (I Cor. 15:26)—and even *that* enemy will be in confused retreat (Is. 65:20) (86).

He advocates all the elements of Christian Reconstruction postmillennialism: a literal fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies of the Messianic kingdom as an earthly kingdom; the complete fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy of the end in Matthew 24:1-35 in the destruction of Jerusalem (AD 70); the preterism that interprets the entire book of Revelation except the last three chapters (especially chapter 20) as completely fulfilled in the past and that necessarily dates the writing of Revelation prior to AD 70; and playing the foolish, arbitrary game with the number of the beast in Revelation 13:18, so as to arrive at “Caesar Nero” by counting the value of the letters in this combination of title and name, *in the Hebrew language*.

There may be no Antichrist and no great tribulation for the church in the future. These would be a “great damp,” in the words of postmillennialist Jonathan Edwards, on the optimism that dreams of earthly dominion.

Mr. Terpstra is a member of Faith Protestant Reformed Church in Jenison, Michigan.

Presenting his advocacy of postmillennialism as lyrical theology enables Wilson to propose his doctrine without consideration of the Reformed amillennial objections to it. Lyricists, poets, and hymn-singers do not engage in serious theological controversy. They simply woo their audience with “lovely” prospects, which would be “glorious if this really *were* true” (11). They do, however, interrupt their singing for the obligatory Christian Reconstruction, satirical jab at “pessimistic Calvinists,” who restrict the extent of the atonement to “a few hundred people,” and for the characteristic Christian Reconstruction mockery of Reformed amillennialism: “In this view, the world is God's Vietnam, and the return of Christ consists of the few lucky ones helicoptered off a roof during the fall of Saigon” (9, 10).

Recourse to lyrical theology also permits Douglas Wilson to advance his postmillennial doctrine without doing the necessary exegesis of crucial concepts. Wilson bases his prediction of a “world transformed by His resurrection,” a world of converted nations, on the biblical texts that teach that God loves the world and that Christ is the Savior of the world. But he never explains what and who this world is. So strongly does he leave the impression that the world loved by God and saved by Christ is every human without exception that he finds it necessary to assure his readers that he does not hold universal salvation.

But what is the world of John 3:16; John 4:42; and John 6:33, 51 (all texts adduced by Wilson in support of his postmillennial doctrine)? Does it include the billions of humans who have already perished outside of Jesus Christ? Does it include the millions dying in unbelief during the lifetime of Douglas Wilson? Is the world of these texts in the end a majority of the human race? Is it a majority of humans alive at some future date? Is it, as some of Wilson's more optimistic colleagues are now teaching, *all* humans without exception who will be alive at some future time?

Wilson does not tell us. Much less does he prove from Scripture the understanding of “world” that is so important to his postmillennial doctrine, whatever his understanding may be. He does not even show any awareness of the long-standing controversy between universalists and Arminians, on the one hand, and Reformed orthodoxy, on the other

hand, over the word and concept “world” in John 3:16 and other places.

Apparently Wilson assumes that “world” in the texts he cites is a majority, perhaps all, of the citizens of all nations, who will be converted and dominate national life at some time in the future (prior to the coming of Christ), and the nations’ life of obedience to the law of God that results from this dominion. He then insinuates this assumption into the thinking of his readers by making the assumption a ground of his postmillennial doctrine, even though his assumption has never been proved, or even stated.

This may be good lyrical theology. It is bad Reformed theology.

The fault of Douglas Wilson’s advocacy of postmillennialism is serious. As Wilson reminds us, again and again, his book is a piece of “historical optimism” (93). “Historical optimism” is the expectation of good times—*earthly* good times—for the church and the believer in the earthly future, before the return of Christ. It expects the conversion of almost everyone; a “Christianized” world of nations; a presumably almost perfectly sanctified church dominant over all of human life worldwide; and a long period of earthly peace, earthly prosperity, earthly power for the church.

“Historical optimism” is possible, indeed demanded, argue Wilson and the Christian Reconstruction postmillennialists, because Scripture’s prophecy of apostasy, Antichrist, and great tribulation has been fulfilled in the past, in AD 70, and because Jesus Christ is now lord and savior of the world.

“Historical optimism” has not been validated by the history of the New Testament church during the past nearly two thousand years. This history of the church, *after AD 70*, has been one of apostasy and persecution. The “mystery of iniquity,” which will finally usher in the lawless one (II Thess. 2:7, 8), has been working within, upon, and against the church over the past centuries, *after AD 70*. Immediately after the disappearance of the office of the apostles, heretics deceived many regarding the truths of God, Christ, and the natural condition of fallen mankind. The institutional church of the Middle Ages became increasingly and desperately corrupt in doctrine and life. Hundreds of thousands of Protestant saints suffered exile, torture, and death at the hands of Rome during and after the Reformation. The huge Roman Catholic Church has hardened herself in her false gospel. Since the Reformation, much of Protestantism

has fallen away into the unbelief and lawlessness of theological liberalism.

Jesus Christ has been lord and savior of the world from AD 100 to the present day. According to Douglas Wilson, all the New Testament prophecies of hard times for the church in the world, including the first nineteen chapters of Revelation, were fulfilled in AD 70. Why then does not the history of the past two thousand years lend any credence to the “historical optimism” of Christian Reconstruction?

As the lyrical theologian of Moscow, Idaho looks out upon the ecclesiastical scene at the beginning of the twenty-first century, what does he see? Hundreds of millions who have fallen away from Protestantism altogether and are thoroughly secular, worldly people. More millions of liberal Protestants, who deny all the cardinal doctrines of the Christian faith. A powerful Roman Catholic Church of a billion lost souls. Muslims and other non-Christian worshipers of false gods, innumerable. Evangelical churches with millions of members in thrall to unbiblical mysticism and under the bondage of the false gospel of Arminianism. Yes, and Reformed and Presbyterian churches, very definitely including Wilson’s Confederation of Reformed Evangelical Churches, yielding to, or championing, the federal vision’s heresy of justification by works—a heresy that Wilson coyly promotes in the book.

What does he see in the world of nations? The nations of the East as entrenched in idolatry as ever they were. And the nations of the West eradicating the last vestiges of the once powerful influence of Christianity upon them; deliberately working out their rebellion against God to the last ditch in the approval, encouragement, and legalizing of the perversion of sodomy; and deifying Man, especially in the omniscient, omnipotent Savior-State—godless, lawless, antichristian, threatening.

And Wilson sings us a sweet song of “historical optimism.”

“Historical optimism” is refuted by Scripture, clearly and decisively—Scripture that even a Douglas Wilson must recognize as referring to the future. In vain would I appeal to most of the passages in the New Testament foretelling apostasy and persecution of the church against the “historical optimism” of Douglas Wilson. He would dismiss them as having been fulfilled in the past in connection with the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. But he cannot thus dismiss Revelation 20:7-9. This is the chapter of utmost importance to postmillennialism regarding the

earthly future. It is the one passage in the Bible that speaks of the millennium. Wilson recognizes Revelation 20 as one of only three chapters in the book of Revelation that refer to the future. “The book of Revelation, with the exception of the last three chapters, was fulfilled two thousand years ago” (107). For Wilson, Revelation 20 promises the thousand-year “golden age” of the earthly victory of the Messianic kingdom and the earthly dominion of the church, *in the future*.

And how will the millennium close, prior to the second coming of Christ? How will history come to its very end? What will be the state of the church and of the nations when Christ returns? What will be the numbers, so important to “historical optimism,” of the citizenry of the Messianic kingdom in comparison with the numbers of the citizenry of the kingdom of Satan?

And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them (Rev. 20:7-9).

Everything “historical optimism” dreams of is shattered on the passage. History comes to its end with a rampant Satan; multitudes of ungodly; a world war against the church; a beleaguered church; deliverance of the church by a wonder, which is catastrophic for the wicked world; Christ returning to a world dominated by the ungodly and as unlike a glorious, earthly kingdom of Christ as could possibly be conceived.

On the basis of Scripture and in light of the realities of history, the Reformed Christian is not optimistic about the earthly future of the church or himself.

But neither is he pessimistic.

He is hopeful.

Douglas Wilson and the Christian Reconstructionists are optimistic. The Reformed believers and their children are hopeful. There is a difference.

Scripture and the Reformed creeds do not proclaim optimism. They do not proclaim postmillennialism. They proclaim hope. And the hope they proclaim is not an earthly kingdom of carnal dominion within history. They

proclaim the hope of the resurrection of the body, the glorification of the entire church (not only of those who happen to live during a “golden age”), and the establishment of the victorious kingdom of Christ everlastingly in the new creation at the coming of Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:23; I John 3:2, 3; II Thess. 1:4-10; II Pet. 3).

The hope of the church, in AD 2010 as in AD 33-70, is the second coming of Christ. “Come, Lord Jesus,” she prays with urgency, in response to His promise, “Surely I come quickly” (which promise is found in Revelation 22—a chapter that Wilson himself acknowledges concerns the future).

This hope has application to the life of believers in this world and to the church in history. For believers, it is the certainty that, in all their struggles and tribulation, especially their struggles against sin, God will preserve them and their children in covenant salvation unto eternal life and glory; will provide all their needs, physical and spiritual; and will make all things work together for their spiritual and everlasting good.

For the church in the world, hope is the assurance that Christ, by His word, will gather, defend, and preserve His elect church—a multitude finally that no man can number, but always a remnant—in truth and holiness unto the day of His appearing.

The grave errors of Wilson’s book are advertised by the title. The book locates the public, visible, glorious, final victory of the Messianic kingdom *within* history. In fact, the final victory of the kingdom is the *goal* of history at the coming of Christ, and then by the wonder of His appearing.

The book thus takes the hope of the church and the believer off the coming of Christ and directs it, now refashioned as mere “optimism,” to an earthly kingdom in history. This error is deadly. Basic to it is Christian Reconstruction’s conception of the kingdom of Christ as earthly, political, carnal. Christ’s kingdom on earth is spiritual, not only in the means of its coming, but also in its nature: the reign of Christ by His gospel and Spirit in the true church and in the hearts and therefore the lives of elect believers and their children.

Read “this little book as though it were a work of fiction,” Wilson exhorts in his introduction (10).

I did.

Because this is what it is. 

Mission Activities

In news from our mission in the Philippines, we recently learned that Rev. Richard Smit and Rev. Daniel Kleyn now preach once a month in the Tagalog language. The sermons are written, translated by a member of the church, and preached from the translation. The people really appreciate hearing the gospel in their own native tongue.

The Berean PRC in Manila scheduled a combined Men's Bible Study meeting for Monday morning, February 22, a holiday in the metro Manila area, held at their regular meeting and worship location. Rev. Kleyn presented a speech centered on principles of Reformed church government, while Rev. Smit led an open-forum question-and-answer period later in the morning.

The Lord willing, the regular future schedule of Rev. Smit will be to preach each Lord's Day for the congregation of the Berean PRC, while Rev. Kleyn will preach in the First Reformed Church on the first and fifth Lord's Days of each month, in the All of Grace PR Fellowship on the second Lord's Day of each month, and in the Christian Faith Ministry on the third Lord's Day of each month. His pulpit supply will also be accompanied by lectures and catechism instruction on topics requested by each group.

We should also add here one more item of news from the Philippines. The Consistory of the Berean PRC advertised a little bit and received in response about 60 orders

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

for video sets of the special conference by the PR Seminary on the Reformer John Calvin held last year. Each set includes seven lectures and one question-and-answer session, all on DVDs. These sets have been produced and have been distributed to all of the contacts who ordered them. May the Lord bless this effort and extend the witness of His truth in this way.

The Consistory of the Hope PRC in Redlands, CA has decided to begin regular Bible studies with the members of the Tucson, AZ PR Fellowship. Rev. Martin Vander Wal, pastor at Hope, will lead these Bible studies, accompanied by another man willing to drive to Tucson. The studies will take place on Thursday evenings twice a month. Plans call for the men from Hope to leave mid-day on Thursday, returning to Redlands Friday morning.

With thanksgiving to God, the Edgerton, MN PRC, with the concurrence of the Domestic Mission Committee, brought a proposal for the organization of the Heritage PR Fellowship of Sioux Falls, South Dakota into an established church at the regularly scheduled Classis West meeting on March 3. We rejoice that the Lord has brought the Fellowship to this point in their three-year history.

Prof. and Mrs. Hanko spent several weeks in Singapore assisting our fellow saints in the Covenant Evangelical Reformed Church. From there they headed to the Philippines to visit our missionaries there. They planned on being there the first week of March. Prof. Hanko also agreed to preach for the Berean PRC in both their worship services on March 7, D.V. On that Lord's Day the Berean congregation planned a special merienda between

services in order to enjoy a time of fellowship with the Hankos.

School Activities

All the School Society members and those planning on becoming members of the Genesis PR Christian School in Lacombe, AB, Canada were invited to become charter members of Genesis' Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) at an organizational meeting scheduled for March 4. The meeting was held at Immanuel PRC. The agenda that first meeting called for approval of changes made to their original constitution, and election of officers. The results of current fundraising efforts were also presented, and possible future fund-raising projects were also presented.

The Mothers' Circle of Hope Christian School in Redlands, CA is currently working on a heritage photo album of all the graduates of Hope Christian School.

Young People's Activities

The Young People's Society of First PRC in Edmonton, AB, Canada invited the members of neighboring Immanuel PRC in Lacombe, along with their own congregation, to a "Dessert Evening" fund-raiser for this summer's Young People's Convention on February 19 at Edmonton PRC. Afterwards there was volleyball, scheduled to help burn excess calories consumed.

The young people of the Southeast PRC in Grand Rapids, MI invited the young people of the Trinity PRC in Hudsonville, MI to an evening of fellowship, games, and pizza on Saturday evening, February 20, at Eastside Christian School.

The Young People's Society of the Hudsonville, MI PRC met together for their monthly special meeting on Sunday evening, February 28. They spent an hour together discussing "Fasting and Prayer."

Congregation Activities

The Fund-raisers of the Grandville, MI PRC hosted a Sunday Evening Musical Program on February 21. A collection was taken for

lowering the cost of Grandville young people's convention fees.

The Jr. Christian Fellowship of the Hudsonville, MI PRC invited the older members of their congregation to a night of fellowship, fun, and games on February 19 at Hudsonville. A light supper with dessert was also served.

Minister Activities

The congregation of First PRC

in Holland, MI met together Sunday, February 28, and extended a call to Rev. James Laning to serve as their next pastor.

The Bethel PRC in Roselle, IL extended a call to Rev. Martin VanderWal to serve as their next pastor.

And Rev. Audred Spriensma, pastor of Kalamazoo PRC, accepted the call from Byron Center PRC. ☺

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Wedding Anniversary

☺ With heartfelt gratitude to God we announce the 60th anniversary of our parents,

GILBERT and GRACE SCHIMMEL,
 on April 13, 2010.

Through the years we have been abundantly blessed by their godly example. It is our humble prayer that the Lord will continue to guide them in their earthly pilgrimage and bless them in their married life. Ill John 4, "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth."

Their loving children:

- ★ Jim and Carol Schimmel
 - ★ Dan and Judy Schimmel
 - ★ Hank and Deb VanderWaal
 - ★ Ruth Schimmel
 - ★ Dave and Shelly Schimmel
 - ★ Tim and Yvonne Schimmel
 - ★ Tom and Beth Schimmel
- 31 grandchildren and
 35 great-grandchildren

Grand Rapids, Michigan

Classis East

☺ Classis East will meet in regular session on Wednesday, May 12, 2010 at the Hope Protestant Reformed Church. Material to be treated at this session must be in the hands of the stated clerk by April 12, 2010.

Jon J. Huisken, Stated Clerk

Resolution of Sympathy

☺ The council and consistory of the Doon PRC extend their Christian sympathy to Miss Stacy Wiersma and her family in the death of her father,

DAVID WIERSMA.

We commend them to the comfort of God's word: "But thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 15:57).

Rev. David Overway, President
 Alan Van Bemmell, clerk

Synod

☺ All standing and special committees of the synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches, as well as individuals who wish to address Synod 2010, are hereby notified that all material for this year's synod should be in the hands of the stated clerk no later than April 15. Please send material to:

Don Doezema
 4949 Ivanrest Ave. SW
 Grandville, MI 49418

Reformed Witness Hour

April 2010

Date	Topic	Text
April 4	"Burning Hearts and Opened Eyes"	Luke 24:13-35
April 11	"Our Substitute"	Isaiah 53:4-6
April 18	"His Silence in Suffering"	Isaiah 53:7-9
April 25	"The Success of His Mission"	Isaiah 53:10-12