

# The Standard Bearer

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# Godliness for Elderly Believers

*“That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience. The aged women likewise, that they be in behavior as becometh holiness, no false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things....”*

Titus 2:2, 3

Paul left Titus amongst the new Christians on the island of Crete with the responsibility to “set in order the things that are wanting” (1:5a). His primary duty was to organize churches by ordaining officebearers (1:5b), and to continue to preach and teach in the interest of the faith of God’s elect and their acknowledging of the truth that accords with godliness (1:1). In addition, Titus was to teach the new Christians to live a godly lifestyle. Godliness in life not only condemns both false doctrine and ungodly living, but it also adorns the truth. A godly life supports and verifies the correctness of the truths of sovereign, particular grace.

Paul begins the second chapter with these words: “speak the things which become [are consistent with, harmonize with] sound doctrine.” He then becomes specific, showing Titus what godliness is for the various members of the Christian churches on Crete. In this

article we consider Paul’s presentation of godliness for aged believers.

## The chief characteristic of the aged

The apostle does not identify the age of the “aged.” It is estimated that when Paul told Philemon that he was aged (v. 9), he was about 60 years old. The aged are those who are old enough to have families with grown children. They have the experience of having raised a family. They have had the benefit of many of the experiences of life.

The aged saints are to be “grave,” literally, honorable and respectable in their words and conduct. While the young should respect and honor those with age and experience, Paul calls the aged to the responsibility of conducting themselves so as to earn the respect. Their conduct should inspire respect and reverence from others. They are to live in such a way that they are worthy of respect.

To be “grave” is to conduct oneself in a way that “becometh holiness” (3). It is to be spiritually mature. It is to live a lifestyle that demonstrates what it is to be holy. The older saints in the church must command the respect of others by a conduct that flows from and harmonizes with holiness. Holiness is the life that results from God’s declaring the elect to be righteous

*Rev. VanOverloop is pastor of Grace Protestant Reformed Church in Standale, Michigan.*

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### Editorial Office

Prof. Russell J. Dykstra  
4949 Ivanrest Ave. SW  
Wyoming, MI 49418  
dykstra@prca.org

### Business Office

Standard Bearer  
Mr. Timothy Pipe  
1894 Georgetown Center Dr.  
Jenison, MI 49428-7137  
PH: 616-457-5970  
FAX: 616-457-5980  
tim@rfpa.org

### Church News Editor

Mr. Ben Wigger  
6597 40th Ave  
Hudsonville, MI 49426  
benjwig@juno.com

### New Zealand Office

Standard Bearer  
c/o Mr. B. VanHerck  
66 Fraser St  
Wainuiomata, New Zealand

### United Kingdom Office

c/o Mrs. Alison Graham  
27 Woodside Road  
Ballymena, BT42 4HX  
Northern Ireland  
alisongraham2006@  
hotmail.co.uk

### Rep. of Ireland Office

c/o Rev. Martyn McGeown  
Apartment 10, Block D  
Ballycummin Village  
Limerick, Ireland

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or justified. God declares us to be holy, that is, saints. To be holy is to be separated from the ordinary and devoted to the service of God. God's gracious salvation calls them who are saved to "live soberly, righteously, and godly" (v. 12). They have been redeemed "from all iniquity" and made "zealous of good works" (v. 14). They have learned humility, for they are "gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men" (3:2). Those who are spiritually mature deny "ungodliness and worldly lusts" (2:12), and are "careful to maintain good works" (3:8).

And they have the "hope of eternal life" (1:2). They look "for that blessed hope and the glorious appearance of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ" (2:13).

For gravity and holiness to be genuine (and not merely an outward show) they must be motivated by a deep love of God. The aged are sobered by the awareness that God is always near, always with them, and thus they live as before God's face. They are sober because they always remember that they have an old man of sin and that spots adhere to their best works. They evidence spiritual maturity by consciously striving to control their sinfulness and sinful desires. One way they control themselves is by controlling their tongue. They strive to "speak evil of no man" (3:2). They understand how easy it is to sin with their tongue, so they put a watch before their mouth (Ps. 141:3). The years of battling sin have taught them the horrors of satisfying sinful desires but also the absolutely amazing nature of grace that gives them forgiveness over and over and over again. They strive to live in holiness.

### Specific admonitions to the aged men and to the aged women

Aged men are to be "sober." Their belief in the doctrines of sovereign, particular grace through faith alone without works leads first to being sober, i.e., vigilant or watchful of oneself. They strive to be moderate in every area of their life. In our youth we are often excessive in our pursuit of the things we like. But the mature man has learned to control himself. Also, he has learned that there is value in pursuing good activities that, though he might not himself prefer them, are beneficial for others. A sober man is moderate in every part of his life.

Very similar to being sober is to be "temperate." This means to be self-controlled, curbing one's desires

and impulses. It is for one to think clearly from a spiritual perspective, ever aware of his own depravity, which makes his desires self-centered. It is to be aware that the first thing that comes to my mind arises out of my old man, and this must be curbed and controlled. I am temperate when I do not just do or say things instinctively, but strive to think (at least) twice, reflecting on what God would have me to do.

Additionally the aged men are to be "sound in faith, in charity, in patience." While their physical health is deteriorating with age, they are to be growing and maintaining health in the spiritual virtues of faith, love, and patience. To be sound in "faith" is to rely more and more on God and on His revealed truth, rather than letting the circumstances of life dismay and discourage. Sound in faith is to depend on God for all things.

To be sound in "love" is to strive always to know rightly the neighbor, seeking his welfare (especially spiritually). It is to "speak evil of no man...but [be] gentle" (3:2). It is to be conscious always of what one can do to increase the spiritual well-being of the church as a whole and of the fellow-saints God puts in his path.

To be sound in "patience" is to develop the characteristic of not swerving from a deliberate purpose of being godly in trials and sufferings. It is very easy when experiencing the infirmities of older age to be cantankerous, irritable, and difficult to live with. But one who is sound in patience steadfastly endures the trials without becoming bitter or angry, persevering in love for God in the face of suffering.

Aged women are also to live in such a way that they are worthy of respect. Note that Paul also told Timothy to instruct the Christian women in Ephesus concerning the same holy behavior. In I Timothy 2:9, 10 he tells them to "adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works." Godliness will manifest itself in what a Christian woman wears, and on what she desires attention to be focused. Those who receive gracious salvation evidence their gratitude for that unspeakable gift by conducting themselves as servants of God, more conscious of what His eye sees than what the eyes of mere humans see.

Specifically, aged women are warned not to be "false

accusers.” It is to slander, fabricating additional details and motives so the stories they relate are more interesting. Such talk often accompanies gossip. False accusing is often occasioned by the desire to know what happened or by the urge to tell others what we know. The seriousness of this sin is often downplayed. But its seriousness is seen in the Greek word used: “diabolos” (devilish). It then is obvious that such behavior does not become holiness.

And the aged women are warned not to be “given to much wine,” that is, in excess or enslaved to it. This language does not forbid any and all use of alcohol, but it certainly calls for self-control by those who are spiritually mature. Their maturity should give them the wisdom to use wine correctly.

Because Titus is to instruct the aged Christian women to teach the younger Christian women to love their husbands and their children, it is implied that the aged women must themselves also live such that they give evidence of *agape* to their husbands and to their children. This is not a natural love, but a spiritual knowledge of and joy in them as the objects of God’s love.

### The great purpose for godliness in the aged saints

The purpose for a godly walk by mature saints is so they can be effective “teachers of good things.” Once we

are aged, we are not without purpose for living. The aged are not to be viewed as unworthy of attention or care. They remain vital parts of the body of Christ. Their experiences of striving to walk by faith in all circumstances has equipped them with something very important. They know what it is to live as a spiritual pilgrim and stranger. They know what it is to strive to exercise faith in suffering and hurt. They know what it is to sin and to repent. It may be that they went through some of the experiences of life in a sinful way, but also those experiences taught them. They have learned and they are still learning “good things.” These experiences equipped them with useful, beneficial, advantageous information. They can help the younger saints.

But to be most effective in passing along the “good things” to the next generations, they must have the respect of the next generation. They cannot teach, if they are held in contempt. So the elderly must do everything they can to make it easier for the young Christians to listen to them. They must live in godliness and holiness so the young want to emulate them and learn from them.

The aged, then, must look for opportunities to teach. They must communicate good things to the next generations carefully, lovingly, and humbly. In this way they still serve the edification of the brethren according to the talents God has given them. 

EDITORIAL

PROF. BARRETT GRITTERS

## A Call for Christian School Teachers (2)

**T**he constant need for good Christian school teachers was the subject of my last editorial. Our Christian schools cannot exist without teachers. And without *good* school teachers there

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*Previous article in this series: April 1, 2012, p. 292.*

is no purpose in having separate, Protestant Reformed Christian schools. Last time I issued a summons to young men and women to consider training to become teachers in our schools, to stand in the place of us parents (*in loco parentis*).

What amplifies this summons is retirements, some women teachers turning to motherly duties if

they marry and bear children, the gradually enlarging population of our churches, and the encouraging expansion of the special education programs. There is real need for Protestant Reformed teachers. I’m thankful to God there is no crisis, no dire shortage of teachers. Nevertheless, we commit ourselves to doing all we can to promote our

schools and the good teachers who make them what they are.

In this editorial, I mention some ways that our covenant community can create a culture that encourages capable young men and women to prepare to teach.

### **The Standard Bearer**

I begin with our magazine. The *Standard Bearer* promotes our schools, praises our teachers for their kingdom and covenant labor, and will do all it can to continue this promotion. The *Standard Bearer's* promotion of good schools and good teachers is well known. From her beginning, the *SB* has explained, defended, developed, and promoted Christian education in a multitude of ways. Special rubrics on Christian education have come and gone—gone, I imagine, when writers believed they had exhausted themselves on the subject. The origin of the rubric “In His Fear,” I understand, was Christian education. For a few years, a rubric called “That They May Teach Them to Their Children” worked out principles and practices of Christian education. One of the *SB's* first special issues was on Christian education. And even a quick search of the *SB* index shows that literally hundreds of articles have been written by our men and women who love to promote this effort.

The pages of the *SB* are open for more to be written. I take this opportunity to urge Protestant Reformed writers to step up and renew our minds with fresh articles about Christian education's history (in this land and others), principles,

practices, current issues, threats, local efforts, and grand blessings. There are so many areas to consider that, for someone who reads broadly and has a keen interest in education, the *SB* could have an article every issue on some aspect of this vital subject.

### **The Local Consistory**

All *SB* readers are aware of Article 21 of the PRC's Church Order. In recent years we have debated (with some vigor, and not a little pain) one important aspect of the article. What would be helpful is a series of articles explaining the *positive* ways consistories can “see to it that there are good Christian school....” If this article is a mandate to consistories, is it not reasonable that at least annually an item appear on the consistory agenda: “Church Order, Article 21”? Then, each consistory could appoint a committee to prepare a brief report on what could be and has been done to carry out the mandate of this article. I pray that the heavy burden consistories bear in these evil days will not cause them to dismiss this suggestion as unrealistic.

Certainly, elders and pastors in family visitation will think of the need for teachers when family visitation brings them to homes with young people. “Have you considered preparing to teach in our Christian schools?” I always reminded myself to ask young men about possible aspirations to the ministry. I even addressed young ladies to remember the possibility that God may want them to be the wife of a pastor or missionary. But I too often failed to

encourage these young people to consider teaching.

We preachers may be reminded to pray often and at length for all the different aspects of our schools. Since God's Word speaks to the education of our children, entire sermons—“school sermons” and “baptism sermons”—can be preached on this subject. Directly and indirectly in catechism classes, ministers can promote good attitudes toward the schools and Christian school teachers.

Elders might remember VanDellen and Monsma's advice under Article 21—the need *repeatedly* to urge parents to reconsider a decision not to use the schools, even to point out “gross inconsistency” in some parents. The *Church Order Commentary* refers to this as a kind of “discipline,” that of course stops short of formal discipline. Read the rest of the strong advice of these wise church order authorities under Article 21.

Is there more that consistories can do?

The committee to plan Classis West's officebearers' conferences could consider a conference on Christian education, at which one of the speeches or a sectional would focus on the consistory's positive duty in respect to Article 21.

### **The Federation Board of Protestant Reformed Schools and the Protestant Reformed Teachers' Institute (PRTI)**

These two organizations are closely related, the PRTI being an organization of PR *teachers*, the

Federation Board an organization of PR *schools*. Both have the laudable goal of promoting and developing good Christian education.

The Federation Board hosts seminars on teaching, sponsors workshops for teachers, provides the Principles and Practices of Reformed Education course, publishes textbooks, and still keeps in mind the real need for a PR teachers' college. These activities help current and prospective teachers, keeping them focused on and enthusiastic about teaching, but they do not directly promote the need for new teachers.

The PRTI publishes *Perspectives in Covenant Education*, a fine little magazine that ought to have much broader circulation than it does. I encourage all readers of the *Standard Bearer* to consider subscribing to *Perspectives*. The contents of the last few issues give an idea of the magazine's worth. There are reviews of children's and young adults' literature (like *The Hunger Games*); editorials about giving tests or the significance of graduations; stimulating feature articles about *vocation*, geography, art, and "Course Goals and themes for Science Courses"; even photographs of graduating classes from schools across the country. To subscribe to this quarterly magazine, just send a check for only \$7 (in the US; US\$8, Foreign) to the Business Manager (see box at the right).

Can both of these organizations consider ways to *recruit* for our schools?

### The Schools Themselves

One of the best means to en-

courage young men and women to become teachers is the good, godly teachers themselves. Just as a faithful pastor can be a powerful means to show young men that the pastorate is a desirable calling, faithful school teachers can draw young people into the teaching profession. Everything that is attractive in the teachers, and everything good and positive in the school, God will use to make the teaching profession desirable.

The opposite may be true too.

School boards and principals always pray for wisdom, realizing that careless decisions and actions can offend the students and their families. Unwise spending, for example, or sinful protection of a lazy or ungodly teacher, will make the school unattractive to the students. The teacher who is satisfied with the old notes and older knowledge (pastors and seminary professors know the temptation) needs loving but firm discipline not unlike church discipline, discipline that leads to change or "excommunication." I might pray that a poor teacher would, in the providence of God, rile up a young man enough that he vows to become a good teacher; but we do not want teachers who are reactionary or come with an agenda.

But positively, how many of us don't have happy memories of teachers who cared for us, devoted themselves to our instruction, loved to walk into the classroom each day, and tried never to let on that they might be having a difficult day? Doesn't it live in our memories that this or that teacher obviously did not teach for his own advancement

*Perspectives In  
Covenant Education*  
Business Manager  
1743 Westwood Ct.  
Jenison, MI 49428.  
Or e-mail  
tbergman@  
covenantchristianhs.org

but ours, did not come to school at the last minute and leave as soon as possible, but was available to talk to us? Or what about that teacher who confronted us in love so that we were not only turned from our foolishness but learned how to deal with folly?

Some of the most important recruiting of teachers is done by the teachers themselves. Thank you, Christian school teachers!

### The Entire Covenant Community

Join with me, members of the PRC and friends of our schools, to stand behind this great cause of covenant Christian education. Join with me, people of God, sacrificially to support this cause so dear to the church of Christ. Join with me, non-tuition-paying members of the church, to commit to significant financial support, thus aiding our young, tuition-paying families. Do not allow me, my flesh and blood sons and daughters, and my sons and daughters in the faith...do not allow me to resign my membership in the school society, or become slack in attendance in the annual meetings. Join with me in remembering the cause of *special* education, so that all the covenant

children can be reared according to their needs.

What a thing of beauty—our homes and schools thriving under God’s blessings. Then, “all thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children.”

God of the covenant, bless our homes with godly parents. Bless our schools—extensions of our homes. And bless our schools with many godly teachers. 

A child’s prayer  
before leaving for school:

“Father, help us to respect our teachers, be kind to the other students, and work hard. Amen.”

UNDERSTANDING THE TIMES

MR. CAL KALSBECK

## Ideas Have Consequences: The Cult of Charles Darwin (4)

“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.”

I Chronicles 12:32

Long before Charles Darwin’s *Origin of Species* gave aid, comfort, and “scientific” support for Adolf Hitler’s gas chambers in Germany and Margaret Sanger’s birth control program in America, Karl Marx wrote (January 16, 1861), “Darwin’s [*Origin of Species*, ck] is very important and provides me with the basis in natural science for the class struggle in history.”<sup>1</sup> Actually, *Origin of Species* did more than provide justification for Marx’s concept of class struggle; it did so by removing the inconvenience of having to include God in the picture. In other words, Darwin’s theory of evolution provided the added bonus of removing the need for a Creator. Or, in the words of Richard Dawkins, a modern-day apologist of Darwin,

<sup>1</sup> Karl Marx and Frederik Engels, *Selected Correspondence* (New York: International Publishers, 1942), 125.

Mr. Kalsbeck is a member in Hope Protestant Reformed Church, Walker, Michigan.

Previous article in this series: January 1, 2012, p. 163.

Darwin’s theory “...made it possible to be an intellectually fulfilled atheist.”

This was, of course, good news for Russia’s Vladimir Lenin and Joseph Stalin. “Survival of the fittest” applied to the human species obviously fit well as a basis for their concept of the inevitability of the revolt of the proletariat (working class) against the bourgeoisie (upper class). Stalin expressed it this way: “Evolution prepares for revolution and creates the ground for it; revolution consummates the process of evolution and facilitates its further activity.”<sup>2</sup>

The history student knows a bit about the consequences of those ideas for the Russian people under Lenin and Stalin, the Chinese under Mao, the Cambodians under Pol Pot, and countless others whose leaders have acted in concert with the implications of Darwin’s *Origin of Species*. While forever unknown in this life, even the most conservative calculations estimate that more than one hundred million lives of men, women, and children have been offered on the altar of Marxism. (Read *The Black Book of Communism* and *From the Gulag to the Killing Fields* for confirmation of these devastating consequences.)

It might not be justified to hold Darwin *directly* re-

<sup>2</sup> Joseph Stalin, *Works* (Moscow and London: 1952/3), vol. 1, 304.

sponsible for that slaughter, but there can be little doubt that his flawed ideas were a significant contributing factor. Similarly, to hold Darwin *directly* responsible for what his modern-day disciples have made of Father Charles' theory of evolution may be unfair; nevertheless, his theory has become *the* creed for the study of science, the adoption of which has resulted in serious consequences for the study of science itself. It is this to which we will focus our attention in this article.

### Wasted Resources

Darwinists often charge that adherence to a Christian world-view retards scientific advancement. A cursory study of history proves otherwise. One needs only to look at scientific work that predated Darwin. Study, for example, the scientific development that resulted from the work of Copernicus (astronomy), Bacon (father of experimental science), Brahe (astronomy, math, physics), Kepler (math, physics), Galileo (physics, math, astronomy), and Newton (physics), professed Christians all, to demonstrate the foolishness of such a notion. Take note of the fact that these scientists believed in a God of order who created an orderly universe, which, they believed, revealed the work of an all-wise God. They labored to *discover* what the all-wise God had done. Clearly their work flourished, founded on that premise.

Interestingly, a better case can be made that adherence to the evolutionary world-view has retarded scientific advancement. Some worldly scientists have recognized the problem. One expressed it this way: "Fundamental truths about evolution have so far eluded us all, and that uncritical acceptance of Darwinism may be counterproductive..."<sup>3</sup> Another, L. L. Cohen, writes,

It is not the duty of science to defend the theory of evolution, and stick by it to the bitter end, no matter which illogical and unsupported conclusions it offers. On the contrary, it is expected that scientists recognize the patently obvious impossibility of Darwin's pronouncements and predictions.... Let's cut the umbilical cord that tied us down to Darwin for such a long time. It is choking us and holding us back.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Vance Farrell, *The Evolution Handbook* (Altamont, TN: Evolution Facts, Inc. 2001), 873.

<sup>4</sup> Farrell, 860.

To empathize better with Cohen's lament, consider the millions of hours wasted and billions of dollars spent in the last one hundred-plus years to confirm as true that which is false. The search for those pesky missing links in the fossil record continues, as does the endless pursuit of other nonexistent evolutionary proofs.

Philip E. Johnson proposes an alternative to this foolishness in his book *Reason in the Balance*. Concerning the discipline of biology, Johnson opines,

"...biology will not only survive but prosper if it turns out that genetic information really is the product of preexisting intelligence. Biologists will have to give up their dogmatic materialism and discard unproductive hypotheses like the prebiotic soup, but to abandon bad ideas is a gain not a loss. Freed of the metaphysical chains that tie it to nineteenth-century materialism, biology can turn to the fascinating task of discovering how the intelligence embodied in the genetic information works through matter to make the organism function. In that case chemical evolution will go the way of alchemy—abandoned because a better understanding of the problem revealed its futility—and science will have reached a new plateau."<sup>5</sup>

### Reason in the Balance

The title of Johnson's book suggests that there is more at stake here than the mere wasting of resources and the retardation of scientific advancement; and it involves the supposed conflict between science and religion.

The prevailing viewpoint of worldly science declares "...that 'religion' is based on faith rather than reason, and that persons who believe in God are inherently unwilling to follow the truth wherever it may lead because that path leads to naturalism."<sup>6</sup> The implication is that religious belief is mere subjective feeling, whereas belief in evolution is objective fact. Nothing could be further from the truth. Johnson makes this clear by presenting a convincing case that demonstrates that, at bottom, science rooted in evolution is also "faith-based" because it is founded on the

<sup>5</sup> Phillip E. Johnson, *Reason in the Balance* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1995), 92.

<sup>6</sup> Johnson, 198.

philosophical assumption of naturalism. And what, pray tell, is naturalism?

Rather than put words in their mouths, listen to the believers in naturalism as they speak for themselves. The atheist philosopher and apologist for evolution Paul Kurtz, in his defense of naturalism, states that "...naturalism is committed to a methodological principle within the context of scientific inquiry, i.e., all hypotheses and events are to be explained and tested by reference to natural causes and events. To introduce a supernatural or transcendental cause within science is to depart from naturalistic explanations. On this ground, to invoke an intelligent designer or creator is inadmissible."<sup>7</sup> 1981 Humanist of the Year, Carl Sagan, sums it up in this manner: "The Cosmos is all that is or ever was or ever will be."<sup>8</sup> Kurtz and Sagan hereby demonstrate that, at bottom, naturalism is a philosophical view that acknowledges only natural elements and forces, denying the existence of the supernatural.

A question must be answered, however: Does worldly science *prove* naturalism or does it merely *assume* it? Johnson demonstrates the latter and in the process concludes, "If science now teaches that naturalism is true, and if science is unimpeachable, then theists ought to face the consequences instead of pretending that they can go on as if nothing had happened. But maybe naturalism is false. It seems that the rulers of science are terrified at the prospect of having to address that possibility."<sup>9</sup>

While modern-day evolutionists may be hesitant to consider the possibility that their naturalism-based theory of evolution is not *proved* by science, apparently their spiritual father was not. In a letter to a certain Dr. Gray, Darwin wrote, "...I am quite conscious that my speculations run quite beyond the bounds of true science."<sup>10</sup> In another letter, this one to C. Lyell, Darwin had this to say, "...thinking of so many cases of men pursuing an illusion for years...often a cold shudder has run through me, and I have asked myself whether I may not have devoted my life to a phantasy."<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, Darwin candidly expressed a concern that apparently plagued him but does not seem to be an issue for his

disciples when he wrote: "With me the horrid doubt always arises whether the convictions of man's mind [including the philosophy of naturalism? ck], which has been developed from the minds of the lower animals, are of any value or at all trustworthy. Would anyone trust in the convictions of a monkey's mind, if there are any convictions in such a mind?"<sup>12</sup>

In his candor Darwin appears to approach the thinking of Johnson that the theory of evolution puts reason in the balance: Is man going to act in concert with the evolving "convictions of a monkey's mind" or as a rational, moral creation of God?

The answer to that question makes all the difference. Romans 1:28 makes this clear: "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." Then follow all those "things" in verses 29-32. Note especially three of the things listed as those "which are not convenient": deceit, haters of God, and inventors of evil things. How fitting they are as characteristics of Darwin and his disciples. In their rejection of God they have invented their godless theory to deceive; and countless have been the victims.

Little do they realize their own victim status as a consequence of their foolishness, for in confining themselves to a world without God they have cut themselves off from the only source of a correct understanding of the universe in which they live. Few would disagree that to ignore reality is irrational, and that is exactly God's judgment, as expressed in Romans 1, on Charles Darwin and his modern-day disciples.

### A Science of Consensus

Is it any wonder, then, that worldly scientists have in some instances turned to consensus science (that is, what the majority of scientists believe must be the correct view) in areas that cannot be scientifically proven? The fact of the matter is that belief in *evolution* is consensus science. Evolution (macroevolution) has never been proven. Rather it has been accepted on the basis of the philosophy of naturalism because the alternative (the existence of God) is unthinkable.

And so the tyranny of consensus has raised its ugly

<sup>7</sup> Paul Kurtz, "Darwin Re-Crucified," *Free Inquiry*, vol. 18, #2.

<sup>8</sup> Carl Sagan, *Cosmos* (New York: Random House, 1980), 4.

<sup>9</sup> Johnson, 192.

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.darwinproject.ac.uk/entry-2109#back>

<sup>11</sup> Charles Darwin, *Life and Letters*, 1887, vol. 2, 229.

<sup>12</sup> Charles Darwin, quoted in Francis Darwin (ed.), *Life and Letters of Charles Darwin* (1903; 1971 reprint), vol. 1, 285.

head in the world of science. In some cases it has even resulted in science bowing to the pressures of politics. The recent man-made global warming consensus, which declared scientific discussion on the matter closed, is a high-profile example. But there are others.

Take for example the case made by President Obama in 2009 for federal money to be used to promote medical research through the harvesting of stem cells of human embryos. Dr. Randy J. Guliuzza writes as follows concerning the speech in which President Obama supported this practice:

The full speech provides evidence that Mr. Obama's words were carefully selected to exploit the accelerating drift of the scientific community's upper echelons from determining "scientific validity" based on rigorous observation and experiment, to basing it on consensus authority. Thus preserving "scientific integrity" would not mean keeping the scientific process from going awry, but keeping scientific outcomes in line with policy.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Randy J. Guliuzza, M.D., "Consensus Science: The Rise of a Scientific Elite," *Acts & Facts*, 38: 4.

This demonstrates how science can be, and sometimes is, manipulated and twisted to serve political purposes. Modern-day Issachar will not be surprised to see more of this as the rise and influence of the anti-Christian world power continues.

In connection with the above discussed consequences of the Cult of Charles Darwin, it is interesting to note that for the most part they were anticipated over 150 years ago. Consider as an example these prophetic words of Professor Haugton of Dublin after a speech presented by Darwin in 1858: "All that was new was false, and what was true was old. This we think will be the final verdict on the matter, the epitaph on Darwinism." Then speaking directly to Darwin, Professor Haugton said, "If your theory accomplishes what you intend, humanity, in my mind, would suffer a damage that might brutalize it, and sink the human race into a lower grade of degradation than any into which it has fallen, since written records tell us of its history."<sup>14</sup>

... to be continued. 

<sup>14</sup> Farrell, 883.

### Robert Godfrey's "Reformed Dream" at NAPARC (2)

Last time, we began an examination of the dream of Dr. Robert Godfrey. The dream is deeply flawed because it minimizes denominational unity and is church politically unsound. But the problems with his dream run deeper. It is an artificial attempt to bring about a fervently desired unity by brushing aside significant differences and minimizing the deep divisions that exist in the Reformed church world over substantial issues.

In the case of the PRC, these deep divisions are the fruit of erroneous synodical decisions approving common grace and the well-meant offer. The dream attempts to find the lowest common, Reformed denominator and hopes the differences will work out. His dream will "force all of us to ask with new focus: what

*Rev. Langerak is pastor of the Protestant Reformed Church in Crete, Illinois.*

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does it mean to be Reformed and what must others believe and do for us to recognize them as adequately Reformed?" (*Modern Reformation*, 16-17).

These are two very different questions—as different as being Reformed and being adequately Reformed. The one asks about a standard of Reformed orthodoxy. The answer is that the standard is the three forms of unity and the Church Order of Dordt. The other asks how many concessions can be given without compromising an artificially contrived unity and implicitly proposes another standard of unity than the confessions. The answer is nothing in the three forms of unity and nothing, in principle, in the Church Order of Dordt can be compromised for the sake of unity.

As is apparent from the outline of his recent speech to NAPARC, Dr. Godfrey quoted Reformed theologian Herman Bavinck approvingly as support for his (Godfrey's) dream.

Bavinck, however, in the very section that Dr. Godfrey quoted, taught that "the idea of a single, all inclusive

church institute” is “forever disturbed” by the observable development of true and false churches in history. According to Bavinck, the doctrine of the true and false church recognizes and gives reasons for divisions and schisms in the development of the church in history. The Reformed “forever disturbed” the idea of a “single, all-inclusive church institute” when they taught the distinction between the true and false church.<sup>1</sup> Certainly Bavinck had in view a church institute including all nominally Christian churches, but the principles of what he says are applicable to a dream for an all-inclusive nominally Reformed church institute.

Furthermore, Bavinck writes that in light of the many divisions, schisms, and discord, “it is understandable that repeatedly many Christians have allowed themselves to be led astray by the attempt to bring about or to maintain this fervently desired unity of the church of Christ, either by violent means—especially by the strong arm of the state—or artificially by syncretism and fusion.”<sup>2</sup> Any attempt at unity by syncretism or fusion Bavinck calls being “led astray” and “artificial.”

He concludes his section on the real church in history with its observable—in some cases deplorable, and in other cases necessary—divisions, with a twofold point about the role of Jesus Christ, the king of the church, in all schism:

He reigns also over the divisions and schism of his church on earth. And his prayer for unity was not born of unfamiliarity with its history nor from his inability to govern it. In and through the discord and dissension, that prayer is daily heard and is led to its complete fulfillment. The profound spiritual sense in which the unity of his disciples was understood by Jesus necessarily excludes all violent and artificial attempts to introduce it.<sup>3</sup>

These are remarkable, almost unbelievable, lines from Herman Bavinck, a participant himself in what may be called a forced union of the A and B churches in the Netherlands that was never satisfactory. Dissension is governed by Christ. Christ’s prayer is led

<sup>1</sup> Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, ed. John Bolt, trans. John Vriend (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008), 4:316.

<sup>2</sup> Bavinck.

<sup>3</sup> Bavinck, 317.

to its complete fulfillment *in* and *through* discord and dissension. And the prayer of Christ for unity excludes in its meaning any artificial attempt to introduce unity. Christ brings about unity, it exists perfectly in Him already, and in due time it will be accomplished and manifested.

The dream of Dr. Godfrey for a single Reformed general assembly is fundamentally syncretism. It is a syncretism that may not take the egregious form of Jehoshaphat’s or of Evangelicals and Catholics Together, but for that reason it is more dangerous and misleading. It speaks of unity in the truth and of the importance of the confessions, but allows wide latitude in the interpretation of those confessions, and brushes aside deep differences over the meaning of those confessions. It talks to truth and unity and at the same time casts unity as a separate goal from truth, when in reality they are one and the same. In his dream is a subtle separation of truth and unity.

Although he says that he wants true unity, a unity in the truth, and that unity must be based on the confessions, a unity that he says will differ from Rome’s coerced unity and the artificial unity of Rome and liberals, one is left wondering how extensively someone in Godfrey’s Reformed general assembly could undermine the confessions before he would no longer be considered “adequately Reformed.”

For instance, could these two interpretations of the confessions exist side by side? Could one teach a universal, saving grace of God offered to all men in the preaching of the gospel; a universal non-saving grace of God to the reprobate ungodly in rain, sunshine, and earthly prosperity; a restraint of sin in the reprobate’s heart and the doing of good works by the reprobate ungodly? And could another in Godfrey’s general assembly teach that God is gracious only to His elect people and blesses them only? History tells us this is impossible. The proponents of Arminian, universal grace cast out the teachers of confessional sovereign, particular grace. The date was 1924.

Or, could these two ideas of the covenant exist side by side? Could one teach that God is gracious to all the baptized children, promises salvation to all of them alike, and allows many of them who receive these promises to fall away into everlasting perdition? Could

another teach that God is gracious to the elect, and them only, promises to them only, and preserves them infallibly unto eternal salvation? Once again history tells us otherwise. The teachers of an Arminian, conditional covenant tried to cast out the teachers of the confessional, unconditional covenant, but Christ sovereignly reigned over that attempt to reject a conditional covenant, to sharpen the Reformed understanding of the covenant, and to preserve a testimony to sovereign grace in the covenant. The conditional covenant and the unconditional covenant are completely at odds with one another. The date was 1953.

And regarding these two examples, evident in the dream is a note that discounts apostasy—apostasy in the Reformed church world—as a necessary reason for the division among Reformed churches. If the entire Reformed church world is divided *only* over the reasons that Dr. Godfrey suggests—“different time of origin, different ethnicities, different issues leading to formation, and different histories”—and the “issues” leading to formation are only akin to ethnicities and times of origin—then the entire Reformed church world is chargeable with schism and sin against the unity of the church. If that is all that is keeping today’s various Reformed denominations apart, then there is nothing at all that should hinder the dream from becoming reality. It could not be the church political monstrosity proposed by Dr. Godfrey, but a true federation of Reformed churches, a Reformed denomination of North America. But that would be looking at the world—the Reformed world—with rose-colored glasses. That would be to ignore history—Reformed history—in which, and in all the divisions of which, Christ the king of the church rules and through which He has realized His own prayer for unity.

There are reasons that Reformed churches must remain separate even though they officially claim adherence to the Reformed creeds. The reason for the Protestant Reformed Churches involves substantive issues leading to their formation: the error of general grace to the reprobate in the preaching, common grace, and the casting out by unjust and illegal deposition faithful ministers who opposed the error of general grace. The issues involve sovereign grace in the covenant. The issues involve the truth of the confessions and practices

clearly and plainly contrary to Scripture, about which it is impossible to budge or to accept teachings different from the confessions.

If NAPARC is serious about unity, then I would propose the following agenda for discussion within that body:

1. Is common grace confessional?
2. Is the well-meant gospel offer confessional?
3. Is the conditional covenant confessional?
4. Is justification now and in the final judgment by faith or by faith and works?

This last proposition would be necessary because at least two of the member denominations of NAPARC have exonerated men accused of teaching this federal vision heresy on the basis of their equally erroneous conditional covenant theology developed by the federal vision. Several other NAPARC member denominations presently are afflicted with federal vision or have produced study committee reports that purport to deal with it but refuse to condemn it as heresy. It is the greatest single issue facing the Reformed church world since Dordt, and at stake in this issue is nothing less than the retention of the Reformed faith’s teaching of sovereign grace—in the covenant—as expressed in the creeds. To date NAPARC has said absolutely nothing.

Discussion of these issues would be a worthwhile endeavor toward unity. It might not issue in a massive Reformed über-denomination of the kind envisioned by Dr. Godfrey. In fact, if the confessional answers are given to those questions, it will likely make a very small NAPARC, but it would make for a great deal more unity.

If headway is made on those doctrinal propositions, NAPARC could add the following items of a doctrinal-practical nature to the proposed agenda:

1. Is divorce and remarriage biblical?
2. Is labor union membership biblical?
3. Are different interpretations of the days of Genesis 1 tolerable in light of Scripture and the creeds?
4. Is the Bible a human, error-filled book, especially as it relates to the Old Testament history of creation, the origin of man, and the flood?

Let the Reformed church world start here. Then there could be serious talk of unity. Anything less is “artificial” and “leads astray.” ☞

# Red

For some strange reason many Christians seem to think God prefers the color black. It's almost exclusively how they see themselves or God's creation, and it's usually what they wear or the only color approved for worship. But everyone bought with Christ's blood should love red. No color more richly, vibrantly, and beautifully expresses the whole of our life—both in the flesh and in the Spirit. With this one color, God symbolizes our life in the earth, our sins in the flesh, His fierce wrath against sin, the precious means of atonement, and the joy of a redeemed life. Without red, life would not only be ugly, dreary, and dark. Life would be impossible.

God loves red and splendidly decorated His creation with it. Already on the first day the Eternal Master loaded His palette with red when He called forth light. Then for five days afterward He dipped brush in this crimson light and exquisitely touched creatures—the sky (Matt. 6:2), the earth, the stars of heaven, trees, flowers, fruits, beasts, and birds—all received a splash of red. Even man. His name means 'red earth,' reflecting in his very complexion and blood from whence he came, and returns. Not black, white, green, or blue made He blood, but red (II King 3:22).

Red symbolizes sin that flows from our flesh like blood. Red especially represents the hateful, murderous passions that often result in spilling of blood. Red is the color of profane Esau (Gen. 25:25) and the pottage for which he traded his birthright (Gen. 25:30). Red is the color of passions stirred up by wine when it is red, sparkles in the cup, and goes down smoothly (Prov. 23:31). Red is the unstoppable warhorse that gallops throughout history with its rider who takes peace from the earth so men kill each another (Rev. 6:4). Because he represents the hatred of Satan, that murderer from the beginning, the Antichrist, is pictured as a great red dragon (Rev. 12:3). Red is also a picture of God's wrath against sin. In the hand of the LORD there is a cup of red wine that He pours out, and the wicked shall drink its dregs (Ps. 75:8). Soon He

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*Rev. Langerak is pastor of Southeast Protestant Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan.*

comes from Bozrah with red garments stained with blood from treading the winepress in His fury (Is. 63:3).

God not only created red with light but made it the first color of the spectrum. This gives red surprising visibility, so that it is used to stain, mark, and set things apart, as when Rahab's house was designated for salvation by a scarlet thread (Josh. 2:18). It also teaches that we first see Christ the Light as red, being redeemed and made nigh by His blood (Eph. 2:13). We might find it shocking today, but in the Old Testament God prominently decorated His church with red. The entire ceiling of the tabernacle was dyed bright red, and scarlet was prominently woven into all the fabrics—walls, veil, door, and ephod—a picture that the red stain of sin is removed and fellowship with God is enjoyed only by violent shedding of Christ's blood under His fiery wrath (Ex. 26:14; 28:1ff.). God has so done. As symbolized by an Old Testament ceremony, God took His red heifer outside the camp, slew Him, and sprinkled His blood on the church of His covenant (Num. 19). Therefore, though your sins be as scarlet, they are white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they are as wool (Is. 1:18).

Although the red stain of sin is removed, red also serves as a picture of the rich blessings the redeemed people of God enjoy now in the Spirit through the shedding of Christ's blood. The church is the vineyard of the Lord that He waters and keeps night and day because it is full of red wine (Is. 27:2-3). Red are Judah's eyes filled with that wine of the Spirit (Gen. 49:12). Until He comes we will continue to celebrate this cup of blessing, that except we drink we have no life because it is the communion of the blood of Christ (I Cor. 10:16; John 6:53). Red is the color of highest honor in His kingdom (Dan. 5:7; Rev. 18:16). It is the color of Christ's kingly robe (Matt. 27:28). Therefore He clothes the daughters of Israel in scarlet (II Sam. 1:24). The virtuous women in His kingdom so clothe their children (Prov. 31:21). And the lips of the church He kisses are as scarlet threads (Song 4:3).

Red. For those redeemed and given boldness to enter into the holy place by the blood of Christ, red is a lovely, beautiful color. 

# The Regulative Principle of Worship (1)

And they have built the high places of Tophet, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my heart.

Jeremiah 7:31

What doth God require in the second commandment?

Answer. That we in no wise represent God by images, nor worship Him in any other way than He has commanded in his word.

Heidelberg Catechism, Question 96.

## Introduction

When John Calvin was asked to give his opinion regarding what were the most important issues in the Reformation of the church in the sixteenth century, he said this: “If it be inquired, then, by what things chiefly the Christian religion has a standing existence amongst us, and maintains its truth, it will be found that the following two not only occupy the principal place, but comprehend under them all the other parts, and consequently the whole substance of Christianity, a knowledge first of the mode in which God is duly worshipped; and secondly, of the source from which salvation is to be obtained.”<sup>1</sup>

So important is right worship, that to Calvin it was a more significant issue in the church even than the doctrines of salvation. This is so because salvation is a means to the end of worship. The church exists for worship. The church trains her members and their children so that there is worship. The church does missions so that there might be worship where there was

<sup>1</sup> John Calvin, “On the Necessity of Reforming the Church,” *Selected Works of John Calvin*, ed. by Henry Beveridge (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1983), vol. 1, 126.

Rev. Griess is pastor of the Calvary Protestant Reformed Church in Hull, Iowa.

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not worship before. Indeed, the chief end of man is to worship.

For this reason we have taken up a series on three great principles regarding the public corporate worship of the church. So far we have seen that public worship is a covenantal assembly gathered to meet with God. We have seen that God carries out that meeting as a dialogue between Himself and His people. Now we see that God is the one who in His sovereignty *regulates* what takes place in that covenantal assembly. He decides what brings Him glory and what will bring us into the experience of the covenant of grace. This is the regulative principle of worship.

## The Principle

The regulative principle of worship is the principle that God in His Word tells us how to worship Him. What God commands in worship must be done, and what He does not command in worship is forbidden. This principle arises first of all out of the second commandment. In the first commandment God commands us *whom* to worship—“no other gods but Me.” In the second commandment God speaks to us about *how* to worship Him. Exodus 20:4: “Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.”

Negatively, the second commandment tells us we are not to worship Him by graven images. Israel was tempted by this. When they made the golden calf, they weren’t thinking that the actual calf was their god; rather they were attempting to worship Jehovah as represented by that calf. The issue was the mode and manner of worship. The calf was not a new god; it was a new *way* to worship Jehovah God.

God says in the second command, “I will not be worshiped that way.” The Heidelberg Catechism expands the application of the principle that God speaks to how

He will be worshiped. The Heidelberg says it is not up to the imaginations of men how God will be worshiped, but rather He will be worshiped in no other way than He has commanded in His Word. He is the sovereign God and He determines how He will be worshiped.

We can state that positively as well. “Worship Me,” God is saying in the second commandment. “And worship me, the way I desire to be worshiped.” That’s the regulative principle—worship God in the way He wants; He’s the one being worshiped, after all. It’s for Him. Give Him what He desires. This is the question we are asking when we speak of the regulative principle of worship: what does God want in the worship of His name? When we come for this covenantal dialogue, what exactly does He want to take place? What are the elements of this dialogue that God requires? May we add different elements to the covenantal meeting?

When people deal with these issues concerning worship, they often begin by asking the wrong question. Some begin by asking, “What will be the most appealing to people? What will allow people to showcase their individual talents the best and make them feel most special? What will be the elements that are most like the culture around us? What will be the most fun for us?” Or on the other side of the coin, sometimes the first question people ask is, “What are our favorite songs from childhood? Or what have we always done?” But none of these questions address the essence of it.

The question first of all is, how does God desire to be worshiped? What does His Word say about the public worship of His name? In worship God speaks to us, and we respond in love for Him. He is the audience, not us. Therefore the question is, what does He desire from us? What will please Him? What brings Him more glory?

I’m sure no husbands reading this have done anything like this before, but what if it was your wife’s birthday and you came home with a present for her. You were excited for your wife to open it because it’s her birthday and you got her a present. And, of course, your wife begins to crack a smile wondering what it could be, because obviously this must be something great if you’re so excited for her to open it. And then she does open it, and it turns out to be three tickets to a Colorado Rockies baseball game. You are very excited

and blurt out, “Isn’t it going to be great?! My brother and I were going to go, and that is why I had two tickets, but we bought another one, and now the three of us can go together.” Then you see the disappointment on your wife’s face. She begins to try kindly to explain to you that she does not like baseball...and you should have known that...and even if she did, with your brother there it is not really even a romantic night away. And as she patiently explains her twinge of disappointment to you she gets to the crux of the matter, “Dear, you were really thinking more about what *you* would want, than what *I* would want when you got this present. And that’s why you were excited about it. It was more for you than it was for me.”

That is, I am afraid, the way God responds to some of the public worship in His church today. God says, “If you took the time to ask the question, what do I want, instead of what do you want, you would have come with something different.” If the erring husband would have spoken with his wife and known her desires, he would have known how to give a gift that was truly for her. So too we must search God’s Word, study Him there, and ask this question: “God, what wouldst Thou desire in the worship of Thy name? God, how do You want your church to respond to the mighty acts and promises You declare to us?” Worship is for God.

### A Principle for Freedom in Worship

The word “regulative” sounds frightening and imperialistic to people today. Nobody wants to be regulated. We like to exist without regulation. People often look at the regulative principle of worship as hampering freedom, but that is not the case at all. In fact, it is the other way around. The Belgic Confession makes this point in Article 32. “We reject all human inventions, and all laws which man would introduce into the worship of God, thereby to *bind* and *compel* the conscience in any manner whatever.”<sup>2</sup>

The Confession is saying that the church should not allow human inventions and laws into the worship of the church, because that puts people under the tyranny of man’s opinion. They bind the conscience to something that God has not required. And true freedom is to do the will of God. The regulative principle of

<sup>2</sup> *Three Forms of Unity*, 42-43.

worship ensures that we have the freedom to worship God the way He wants, not the particular way a teenage worship leader wants. It saves us from being subject to a worship governed by the opinions of a specific individual or group of individuals. Without the regulative principle we are all subject to whatever somebody who puts together the worship decides is best. The regulative principle saves us from the regulations of someone's individual opinions, and it places us under the regulation of God. It is the only source of true freedom in worship to ask and allow God to answer this question, "God, what dost Thou desire?"

### The Regulative Principle in the Old Testament

God has not been silent in telling His church that this is a principle of worship. All throughout Scripture, this principle is clear; God commands what is to be done in the worship of His name. In the Old Testament this principle is clear. God tells Moses when he builds the tabernacle for worship that he may not build it and the furniture any way he wants, but rather, Exodus 25:40: "And look that thou make them after their pattern, which was shewed thee in the mount." God gave specific instructions about how the tabernacle was to be built and where it was to be placed and how the worship in that tabernacle was to be carried out.

In Deuteronomy 12:29-32 God commands Israel to worship Him according to the way He has commanded. He says to His people in that passage, I know that when you get to Canaan it is going to be a temptation for you to worship the way the pagans around you worship. So, "Take heed to thyself that thou be not snared by following them, after that they be destroyed from before thee; and that thou enquire not after their gods, saying, How did these nations serve their gods? even so will I do likewise. Thou shalt not do so unto the LORD thy God."

In other words, be prepared for your worship to go against the grain of the prevailing culture of the day. For the question in worship is not, "What is everybody else doing with respect to their gods?" Rather, as God states positively in the next verse, "What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it." Not: "If I don't forbid it

then consider it wide open." But: "Do what I command you, and that only. Don't add or take away from that. That's the principle you must follow. Do what I desire, and I tell you what I desire in my Word."

And then the text printed at the top of this article is a striking example of God giving this principle of worship. Jeremiah 7:30-34 records the Old Testament Israelites polluting the public worship of God. The Israelites were following after the pagan worship of the nations around them, even though in the passage just discussed from Deuteronomy, God had told them not to.

Horror of horrors, they were offering their children as sacrifices to God in the Valley of Hinnom, which is on the south side of Jerusalem. They were doing this, many scholars believe, as worship to the pagan gods *and also* as worship to Jehovah. They thought they could lump Jehovah in with all the other gods and worship Him the same way the pagan gods were worshiped. They thought, if the other gods like this sort of worship, surely Jehovah does too.

That such is what they were thinking is implied when God says in verse 31 that this was not in His heart. Some were saying, "I'm sure Jehovah has this in His heart. If the other gods desire it, Jehovah must as well." In this way the worship of God was corrupted with this horrible pagan practice. The question, what does everybody else do, and what is in the hearts of the gods of the age, led them all the way actually to offering their children on altars to Jehovah.

But what is so instructive for us here is the way God responds to their worship in Jeremiah 7:31. You would expect God to say, "What are you doing, killing your own children? What are you thinking?" And certainly God does view that practice as horrific in itself and unbelievably pagan and terrible, yet God doesn't attack the practice. He does not point to the symptom, but to the root issue here. The heart of the matter, God says in verse 31, is you have done in worship that "which I commanded not, neither came it into my heart." In other words, "This would have been prevented if you followed the regulative principle of worship! If you had delved into my Word and asked, 'What does God command us to do in His Word? For His Word reveals to us what is in His heart regarding the worship of His

name,' then you would not have done this. As horrible as it is that you are offering your children as sacrifices, the root of the matter here is that worship is to be what I command, because what I command comes from my heart. If you were truly interested in what I desired, in what was in my heart, you never would have gone down this path. This is how you got here, you ignored the regulative principle of worship." And we are like the Israelites. Our hearts are idol-factories. We ought to have a healthy fear of our idol-making capabilities, and instead turn to God's heart as recorded in His Word regarding worship.

There are many examples, too, in the Old Testament where this principle is *enforced*. Nadab and Abihu, who are punished in Leviticus 10 for bringing strange fire that the Lord did not command, provide an example. Uzzah touching the ark, even when his motive was right, is another example. And there are others. God takes worship seriously and will not allow people called by His name to trifle with His holiness.

Next time we will see this principle in the New Testament, and apply it to public corporate worship. 

## Sing for Strength

### What is music?

At bottom, music is a specific arrangement of sounds. These sounds are known according to their pitch, and their duration can be controlled. Their arrangement is what makes music.

But music is so much more. Music is one of the best gifts that God has given to His highest creature, man. It is one of the finest of arts, in which man can employ the creativeness of his mind and the nimbleness of his body. With music, man can express in a powerful way the feelings of his heart. With music, man can arouse powerful thoughts and emotions in the minds of those who listen.

But, like many of God's gifts, music can be used by man for good or for evil. There is music that is good, and there is music that is bad.

From that point forward, the argument begins. What is good music? What is bad music? The difference between good music and bad music is not merely a matter of taste.

There is music that is bad music because it promotes what is evil. Music (these sounds) is used to celebrate and extol evil. Popular music often features foul, ungodly language and lewd behavior. Obscenity is put to music, either by way of lyrics that are sung, or by words that are chanted or merely spoken. The evil deeds of men, the most foul crimes imagined or actually committed, men declare in their music, often by only the pounding out of the same incessant rhythm. This corrupt music is a powerful reminder of Lamech's song, which he sang to his two wives (Gen. 4:23, 24). In his song, Lamech celebrated his murder and compared himself to God. Music used in this evil way powerfully delivers its evil content straight into the heart.

Beware! Popular music so often celebrates what is sinful and evil. If you listen closely to it, you will find that so many popular songs either explicitly or implicitly mention something sinful. Music helps both to wrap up that evil and to bring that evil into your heart, where it will find a ready place. While you may claim that you can distinguish between the music and the words, you also know that if you hear the music of the same song without the words, those words will so easily come to your mind.

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*Rev. VanderWal is pastor of the Protestant Reformed Church in Wingham, Ontario, Canada.*

This bad music has its effect on your heart. When you listen to it, what does your heart look like? Does it arouse feelings that are pleasant and delightful, or feelings of raw power or even of anger? If you may say there is no effect, let me ask you this: When it is silent around you, what kind of music does your heart begin to play?

### What is good music?

First of all, good music is orderly and harmonious. Good music also has differences. Different harmonies and different melodies are set over against each other for the sake of contrast. Those differences will be developed and explored. But the ultimate result is harmony.

Good music also is pleasant and delightful to the hearer. Your experience in listening to good music is that you are enriched. You are enriched by the experience itself, the simple enjoyment of a good gift of God, similar to enjoying a fine meal. When you begin to appreciate the harmony and balance of good music, you may also find and enjoy harmony and balance elsewhere, in everything from books you read, to paintings you see, and even sermons you hear. You will find, too, that your own thoughts become more orderly, balanced, and harmonious.

### What does all that mean for you young people?

It means, first of all, that you must be discriminating in your choice of music. Your ears are not your own. Your mind and heart are not your own. God has given you your ears and mind and heart to enjoy His gifts and to bless His name when you enjoy them. And music ranks among the highest of His blessed and excellent gifts. Your ears—I should say the ears that the Lord has loaned to you—are not to be filled with just any kind of music, much less with music that is polluted and vile. Your minds and hearts are not to be tuned to the kind of music that is displeasing to Him. There is no place for corruptible, vile things in His temple. You must also learn to despise and abhor what is displeasing to God, even when you hear it on the street. Radio, television, even printed media in their adoration of “musical” entertainers and celebrities, will not help you in this process.

Be not conformed to the world. Take inventory of the music you listen to. Does it lead you into worldliness? Does it lead you into sin? Is it pleasing to God?



Most of all, take a look at what a gift music is intended to be. Music is a gift that can be *listened to* with much enjoyment and even profit. But music is really meant to be *made*. God gave you music for you to make. He gave you a musical instrument with your birth. And God has given to you the ability to play this musical instrument. It is a musical instrument that all other musical instruments envy, and the best players of other instruments are rated as to how closely they approach it. That instrument is your voice.

Your voice is the best instrument for two reasons. The first is that it is the closest to your heart. It is the instrument used in your confession of faith. With your mouth you declare and confess the truth that God has put in your heart by His Word and Spirit (Rom. 10:10). So, too, the happiness and joy in your heart you express best with your lips.

The second reason is that your voice is the only musical instrument that actually uses words. Truly you are fearfully and wonderfully made! Yours is the instrument that praises God, repeating back to God the words that He has first given you. Your voice is the musical instrument of adoration, worship, and praise. It is the instrument of lamentation and supplication, as well as of thanksgiving. “I will sing of the mercies of the LORD for ever: with my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness to all generations” (Ps. 89:1).

Your voice is also the one musical instrument that will be raised up and glorified to be used in heaven to show the praises of your glorious Redeemer. Think of the new song sung before the Lamb of God in glory (Rev. 5:9, 10).



Your voice, this wonderful musical instrument, is capable of performing alone. But, more importantly, you are able to take your place among others who are making profitable use of their instruments. You can join your voice with the voices of others in harmony (or in unison). Your privilege is to take up this glorious privi-

lege every Sunday with your church family. Together you sing in the presence of the living God, who is your audience! You sing for Him. You sing to be pleasing to Him. You sing to His delight and for His enjoyment, to be pleasing to His ears.

Congregational singing is the reason to be a good musician. It is the reason to make sure that you fill your ears (and your mind and heart) with music that is good. It will help you do your best in worship on Sundays. It is the reason why you ought to practice the instrument of your voice alone and with others. It is why you should prefer to sing Psalter numbers and good hymns when you have opportunity, either by yourself or with others. It is why you should sing not worldly songs but Christian songs.

Let your strength of youth also show in the strength of your singing. Avoid being timid and self-conscious in your singing. The Lord is worthy of your very best, your best voice and your best singing. He is worthy of your clearest words and your tightest harmonies. Neither does the Lord intend that you should sing your part by yourself. You and your friends together should decide to set aside your self-consciousness, and decide to give the Lord your best. In your Young People's So-

ciety meetings, or in your school choir, there will be the holdouts, but let them be in the minority and not form the majority. Sing out! Sing loudly and clearly, giving expression to the joy of the Lord in your heart!

Your singing has wonderful benefits for you and for your friends with whom you sing. According to Ephesians 5:19, in the singing of those "psalms and hymns and spiritual songs" you actually "make melody in your heart to the Lord." This singing is part of what it means to be "filled with the Spirit," according to verse 18, and is set by God over against drunkenness. This verse, together with Colossians 3:16, shows that singing these songs is a means of teaching. According to Ephesians 5:19, you teach yourself. According to Colossians 3:16, you teach others, and others teach you.

### How?

With music, you are able to take the Word of God and put it in the same places of your heart that good music occupies, places of love, affection, sweetness, and delight, where the Word of God is meant to live, prosper, grow strong, and bear much fruit. In your heart, in the heart of your friends, that music makes you strong in the Lord. What a gift! 

GO YE INTO ALL THE WORLD

REV. WILBUR BRUINSMA

## The Mystery of the Church

**T**he Ephesian believers lived during a pivotal period in the history of the church. It was that time, soon after Christ's ascension into heaven, when God chose to reveal to His church what had been hid in Him since the beginning of time (Eph. 3:9). That which God was now revealing to the early New Testament church had "in other ages" remained a mystery to the sons of men (v. 5). Now the saints in

Ephesus are privileged to receive the labors of a man to whom this mystery had been revealed: the great apostle Paul. Paul writes in Ephesians 3:3-5, "...by revelation he [God] made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit." Christ had revealed this hidden knowledge to Paul in the wilderness of Arabia (Gal. 1:17). It was then that Paul came to "visions and

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*Rev. Bruinsma is Eastern Home Missionary of the Protestant Reformed Churches, stationed in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.*

revelations of the Lord" (II Cor. 12:1). He was "caught up to the third heaven" (v. 2); "caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter" (v. 4). There Paul learned the mystery! There it was opened to him! Now Paul reveals that mystery of the church to the saints in Ephesus as well as everywhere he preached!

What is this mystery, this knowledge that had been hid in God from the beginning of the world? "That the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel" (Eph. 3:6). The mystery that is now being revealed by the holy apostles and prophets, and especially Paul the missionary to the Gentiles, is the blessed truth that the church of Christ is international, worldwide. The gospel of salvation was no longer to be limited to the Jewish people, but would now spread throughout the earth and encompass the various nations and peoples of the world. The result would be that Christ would gather His church from all peoples, nations, and languages of the earth.

This mystery may not seem so special to us anymore today. After all, it has been revealed to the church for a couple of thousand years already. This blessed mystery may not even spark a little interest in us anymore, much to our shame. But can you imagine being one of those first Gentile believers incorporated into a church that for hundreds of years had excluded the Gentile nations? Paul bluntly told these Ephesian believers that in times past they were without Christ and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world (Eph. 2:12). Now Paul explains to these saints, "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God" (Eph. 2:19). Can you imagine the excitement of the Ephesian believers when they heard Paul expound to them the unsearchable riches in Christ? God is now including them in His church! They are partakers of salvation, reconciled unto God in one body by the cross!

It is true that the other apostles also were given the mission mandate to preach the gospel to all the world, but the apostle Paul was used by Christ in a special way to fulfill that mandate. By means of Paul, what God had intended for His church since the beginning

of time began to be fulfilled. It is significant that Paul, in Ephesians 3:9, speaks of this mystery of a universal church as being hid in God. This refers to the eternal purpose of God in Christ or, in other words, to God's divine counsel for all things. In eternity, in His plan for all things, God chose unto Himself a church in Christ. God did not elect His church piecemeal. He did not elect the children of Abraham as His church and then in His decrees decide later to choose the Gentiles too, in order to add them to that church. God chose His church in Christ as a whole, as a body of people. We who are subject to time tend to view God's counsel that way, that is, in the order in which we see events occurring. What we see from a human point of view is that, after Christ ascended into heaven, God chose to add to His Old Testament church people from the various nations of the earth.

But, if that were the case, the universality of the church would be an "after-thought" in God's counsel. We must remember of God what Isaiah declares in Isaiah 46:9-10: "Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." In His plan for all things God chose unto Himself a body of people in Christ to be His church. That entire church is one living whole, with Christ as its head. When Paul writes, therefore, that the mystery of a universal church was hid in God, he means that, though the saints in the Old Testament could not comprehend the mystery, nevertheless the universal church of all ages was in the counsel of God from all eternity. In God's counsel, before time began, the saints of the New Testament were elected and known by God together with the Old Testament saints. But that reality God hid in Himself for ages before finally revealing it through the apostles.

This means that the great missionary mandate Christ gave His church before His ascension is not some special project the church becomes involved in if it so chooses. When Christ said to His disciples in Acts 1:8, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria,

and unto the uttermost part of the earth," it was not merely a statement of fact. The mystery had now been revealed unto Christ's holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. Their task, and in them the task of the church, is to make known unto all men the unsearchable riches of Christ. What Paul and the apostles began, the church as institute is called to carry on today. Why? In order to accomplish the mystery now revealed, that the nations of this world should be fellow-heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel.

It is of importance to understand what Paul means by the term he uses to describe this New Testament transition into an international church. He speaks of this as a mystery. All those who have read a good mystery book know what a mystery is. Someone commits a murder, for example. But who committed that murder remains a mystery. There are pieces of evidence that perhaps point to a particular person, but how the evidence fits together cannot be determined. Though it is all there, the crime remains a mystery. Who committed the murder remains unknown.

Until—until that one piece of evidence is found that links all the evidence together. Then the whole crime is revealed and the murderer is convicted. It no longer remains a mystery.

The same is true regarding the grafting in of the nations into the church of the Old Dispensation. It remained a mystery to the saints in the Old Testament. It was not that the evidence of this worldwide church could not be found in the Old Testament. It was there. The entire body of the church of Christ was a reality in God's counsel before the beginning of time. For that reason, God actually spoke frequently of that reality through the mouths of the prophets in the Old Testament. Old Testament Scripture is replete with references to the gathering in of the nations into the church. Old Testament historical accounts foretell it, the psalmists sing of

it, the prophets explain it. We hope to consider some of these passages in future articles.

Yet, the Old Testament church could not put the evidence together fully in order to understand the reality of which they spoke. The idea of an international church was not yet comprehended by the sons of men. Peter explains in I Peter 1:10-12:

Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.

The evidence was there. God spoke of the glorious reality of a universal church in what we would consider

to be very plain language in the Old Testament. But the minds of the saints of old were blinded. Paul explains in II Corinthians 3:12-17 that a veil remained untaken away in the reading of the Old Testament. That veil was removed in Christ through the Spirit. The Spirit alone gives light to our understanding. This is why that which was hidden in the Old Testament is now revealed in the New. The Spirit of understanding was poured out on the church. What was for ages a mystery to the church is no longer a mystery today. The mystery is solved! Or better, it is a mystery revealed!

One who ignores this mystery when developing the doctrine of the church and covenant ignores a significant aspect of Scripture. The epic beginnings of the universal church were only beginnings. The command of Christ to His church, "go ye and teach all nations," did not cease with the apostle Paul and his missionary journeys. The need to preach the gospel is not limited to the generations of believers, however necessary that might be. The mystery has been revealed

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from the nations!  
The church must  
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to the church today: Christ gathers His people from the nations! The church must therefore preach the gospel to all peoples in order to call them to faith and repentance. We may not ignore the truth that with every new generation God prunes His church of those branches that bring forth no fruit. In their place God grafts into His church new believers with their families. The mystery is revealed! We may not ignore it! Now the church labors with all diligence to see the mystery accomplished. Hear the song of the redeemed in Rev-

elation 5:9: "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation."

"For this cause," Paul writes in Ephesians 3:14, 15, "I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named!" May the church bow with Paul and preach the unsearchable riches of Christ to the nations! 

## CLASSIS WEST REPORT

## REV. DOUG KUIPER

Classis West met on March 7, 2012, in Hope PRC of Redlands, CA. That the delegates might have even more opportunity to enjoy the beautiful springtime weather in southern California, an officebearers' conference was scheduled for the day before Classis, on the subject "Herman Bavinck: The Theologian."

Classis treated one matter of discipline by advising a consistory to proceed with increasing censure. This aspect of Classis' work is never enjoyable. We pray that God continue to give this consistory the grace to manifest faithfully this mark of the true church of Christ, and that He will lead the sinners to repentance.

Apart from that, the agenda of Classis was routine. Classis adopted a classical appointment schedule for Edgerton PRC, and approved and forwarded to synod subsidy requests for six churches.

Classis appointed Rev. J. Laning to a three-year term on its classical committee, and elected Revs. S. Key, R. Kleyn, D. Kuiper, and J. Marcus to be church visitors for the upcoming year. Alternate church visitors are Revs. A. Brummel and J. Laning.

Classis chose Rev. C. Spronk to be a synodical deputy, and appointed as his alternate Rev. D. Lee. Pending Synod's approval, and if God wills, these men will serve three-year terms in that capacity.

Classis appointed the following as delegates to Synod 2012: MINISTERS—Revs. S. Key, R. Kleyn, D. Kuiper, J. Laning, C. Spronk. ELDERS—Keith Bruinsma (Peace), Peter Brummel (Hull), Steve Feenstra (Hope Redlands), Leon Uittenbogaard (Calvary Hull), Bert Worries (Crete). Alternates are: MINISTERS—Revs. A. Brummel, C. Griess, N. Langerak, D. Lee, D. Overway. ELDERS—Robert Brands (Loveland), George DeJong (Crete), Dennis Griess (Loveland), James Lenting (Crete), Victor Solanyk (Loveland).

Classis accepted the invitations of Calvary PRC to host the meeting in September 2012, and of Lynden PRC to host the meeting in March 2013.

The expenses of this meeting totaled \$12,357.92.

May God bless these decisions for the good of the churches and the glory of His name.

Rev. Douglas Kuiper, Stated Clerk 

## NEWS FROM OUR CHURCHES

## MR. BENJAMIN WIGGER

### Evangelism Activities

The Evangelism Committee of the Hope PRC in Redlands, CA is now a broadcasting member of Sermonaudio.com. You can easily visit [sermonaudio.com/evangelism-](http://sermonaudio.com/evangelism-)

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

hopeprc to listen to Rev. Huizinga's sermons on your personal computer, tablet pc, or Smart phone.

The Evangelism Committee of the Georgetown PRC in Hudsonville, MI informed their congregation that they recently completed their Bible study series at the Men's Shelter of the Holland Rescue Mission in Holland, MI. Meetings

were held in the cafeteria with an average of about 20 men from every background, ranging in age from 19 to nearly 70. The Evangelism Committee appreciated the help, visits, and involvement of their congregation. The study of the Beatitudes was well received and resulted in several of the clients visiting Georgetown for a worship

service. The Georgetown congregation trusts that our Lord will use their efforts to build up the faith of His children there.

Although this is probably not usually seen as an evangelism activity, we include here a note concerning our denomination's Psalm Choir. You might be interested to know that our Psalm Choir has loaded at least four of their songs to YouTube. I found them simply by going to YouTube and typing in pr psalm choir. A member of the choir also informed me that they have been viewed in sixteen different countries.

### Congregation Activities

The Activities Committee of Calvary PRC in Hull, IA made plans for an outing at the All Seasons Center on March 10. Pizza was served at 5:30 P.M., and then the congregation had their choice between swimming or ice skating until around 9:00 that evening.

On the Tuesday evenings of March, Prof. Dykstra held a four-week class at the Grandville, MI PRC on the history and doctrinal controversy of 1953. Reading material for the class included a section from Prof. W. Heyns' *Manual of Reformed Doctrine*, a book containing Dr. K. Schilder's reaction to the Declaration of Principles, and Rev. H. Hoeksema's *Believers and Their Seed*. Each week Prof. Dykstra intended to look at one particular aspect of the covenant and the controversy surrounding it.

Following an announcement in the Faith and Fellowship Newslet-

ter of the Faith PRC in Jenison, MI, their Council recently reminded the congregation that they had accepted oversight of donations to the Akademie für Reformatorische Theologie (ART) in Hannover, Germany and its journal *Bekennende Kirche* (The Confessing Church). The German saints involved in running this seminary and its parent congregation, the Bekennende Evangelisch-Reformierte Gemeinde (BERG), have faced significant trials for their Reformed faith and their insistence on the inerrancy of Scripture. In an effort to help these saints maintain a faithful witness in Europe, Faith's Council has approved three collections to support the on-going operation of ART and *Bekennende Kirche*. A brief presentation on ART and BERG was held Sunday, March 18, where Faith's congregation could find out more about the history of the seminary, its two professors and nine current students, and the BERG congregation in Giessen. Members of Faith's Council and the Contact Committee of our denomination were present to answer any questions.

Many thanks to our Byron Center, MI PRC for the efforts they put forth in sponsoring what we hope was the first but not last "Men's Conference," on March 8 and 9 at their church. The conference featured speeches by Rev. Spriensma and Rev. Haak on "The Godly Man," based on Titus 2:11-14. Rev. Spriensma spoke on "Living soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world" on Thursday evening, and on Friday evening the men heard Rev. Haak speak on "Look-

ing for the glorious appearing of our Savior." These speeches were followed by eight sectionals featuring 30 men from our denomination, sharing their experiences and wisdom with the 200 conference attendees on such topics as: Practical ideas for family devotions, Applying loving discipline, Balancing life's priorities, the Role of a godly grandfather, Battling temptations men face, God created men and women differently, Cultivating the desire to serve, Gaining others to Christ by our godly conversation, etc. We thank Byron Center for giving us men the opportunity to be able to open God's Word and encourage each other in our various callings and to enjoy good Christian fellowship together.

### Young Adult Activities

The Young Adults of the Loveland, CO PRC hosted their annual Young Adults' Spring Retreat March 12-15 at the YMCA of the Rockies in Estes Park, CO. In addition to the usual events surrounding a Young Adults Retreat, Pastors Key and Spronk spoke on the theme, "Are You Healthy?"

### Denomination Activities

The last regularly scheduled meeting of Classis West was held on March 7 at the Hope PRC in Redlands, CA. Prior to the meeting on Tuesday, March 6, Classis West hosted an officebearers' conference on the subject of "Herman Bavinck: The Theologian." Speeches were given by Prof. Engelsma, Rev. Laning, and Rev. Hanko. ☺

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Notice

■ The *Standard Bearer* Index Volumes 1–87 is now available in a digital version. The cost is \$10 and it can be purchased at the RFPA website ([www.rfpa.org](http://www.rfpa.org)), by calling the RFPA office at 616-457-5970, or email [paula@rfpa.org](mailto:paula@rfpa.org). (The index will no longer be available as a hardcopy.)

### Resolution of Sympathy

■ The Men's Society of Hope PRC, Walker, MI, expresses Christian sympathy to Mr. Neil Meyer and family in the death of his mother,

#### MRS. BEA MEYER.

May the beautiful words of Paul in Romans 14:8 speak to you at this time: "For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's."

Harry Langerak, Pres.  
Clare Kuiper, Sec't.

### Resolution of Sympathy

■ The Council and congregation of Kalamazoo PRC would like to express their Christian sympathy to John and Cheryl Vlietstra and family on the death of Cheryl's grandmother,

#### BERTHA HOEKSTRA.

May the Vlietstra family be comforted with the words of our faithful heavenly Father: "Therefore the redeemed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away" (Isaiah 51:11).

Rev. Michael De Vries, President  
Tom Kiel, Clerk

### Classis East

■ Classis East will meet in regular session on Wednesday, May 9, 2012 at the Georgetown Protestant Reformed Church.  
Jon J. Huisken, Stated Clerk

### Wedding Anniversary

■ With praise and thanksgiving to our covenant God and Father, we would like to announce the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our son, parents, and grandparents:

#### JOHN and KAY WIERENGA,

who were united in marriage on April 7, 1972.

Our prayer is that our heavenly Father will continue to bless them and keep them in the years to come. "I will sing of the mercies of the LORD for ever: with my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness to all generations" (Psalm 89:1).

- ✧ Greta Wierenga (mother)
- ✧ Brian and Regina Wierenga  
Christina, Kaitlin, Ian, Darin, Kari,  
Matthew, Olivia, Noah
- ✧ Rodney and Kristi Wierenga  
Lanae, Mackenzie, Jayden, Luke
- ✧ Paul and Melonie Linker  
Audrey, Nathan, Samuel, Hendrik
- ✧ Martin and Gaylene Van de Pol  
Jordan, Tianna
- ✧ Nathan and Charlene Gallagher  
Austin, Hayley, Annika
- ✧ David and Michelle DeBoer  
Paige, Brittney
- ✧ Maria Wierenga
- ✧ Philip Wierenga
- ✧ Jonathan Wierenga
- ✧ Kayla Wierenga

Lacombe, Alberta, Canada

### Resolution of Sympathy

■ The Mary/Martha Society of Hope PRC in Redlands expresses its sincere Christian sympathy to fellow members Chris McClaurry, Beth VanUffelen, and Dawn Howerzyl in the loss of their dear husband, brother-in-law, and uncle,

#### MICHAEL MC CLAURY.

May the family be comforted by these words found in Deuteronomy 33:27: "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms."

Gary Gaastra, Vice-President  
Carisa denHartog, Secretary

### Resolution of Sympathy

■ The Adult Bible Study and the Women's Wednesday Morning Bible Study of Southwest PRC express their heartfelt Christian sympathy to Mr. Darrel Huisken, Joel and Janna Huisken and family, and Alison Huisken in the death of their wife, mother, and grandmother,

#### MRS. BONNIE HUISKEN.

We pray that the Lord will continue to comfort the family in their loss. "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth" (Psalm 121:1, 2).

Mr. Don Doezeema, Bible Leader  
Michelle Bodbyl, Secretary  
of Adult Bible  
Rev. A. den Hartog, President  
Evonne Kreuzer, Secretary  
Women's Wednesday Morning  
Bible Study

### Notice

■ Do you have bound volumes of the *Standard Bearer* that you are willing to sell? The RFPA is looking to buy back an inventory of these volumes. We will pay \$15 each for volumes 1-40 or \$5 each for volumes 40-87. Please contact us at (616) 457-4970 or [mail@rfpa.org](mailto:mail@rfpa.org) for more information.

### Notice

■ The Loveland Protestant Reformed Christian School invites all interested in joining them June 22, 2012, for a celebration of 50 years of education as well as a dedication of the new church and high school addition. Dinner and a program will be provided. To help with planning, please RSVP by May 26 to Jordan Kamps at [jnckamps@yahoo.com](mailto:jnckamps@yahoo.com) or 970-776-8151 if you will be able to attend.