

# The Standard Bearer

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**Seeking the city that continues**

Rev. James Slopsema

**Reflections as we await  
the coming year**

Rev. Kenneth Koole

**Murder**

Rev. Rodney Kleyn

**The lines are fallen  
unto me**

Mrs. Margaret Laning

**Another ruling for  
religious freedom**

Mr. Brian VanEngen



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## Contents

### Meditation

- 151 Seeking the city that continues  
Rev. James Slopsema

### Editorial

- 153 Reflections as we await the coming year  
Rev. Kenneth Koole

### Search the Scriptures

- 156 Upon this rock (36)  
A remnant returns (2)  
Mr. Don Doezema

### Believing and confessing

- 158 Murder (Heidelberg Catechism, LD 40)  
Rev. Rodney Kleyn

### Things which must shortly come to pass

- 161 Premillennialism (23)  
Fundamental Reformed critique of premillennialism (5)  
Prof. David Engelsma

### When thou sittest in thine house

- 163 The lines are fallen unto me  
Mrs. Margaret Laning

### Reformed Free Publishing Association—Annual meeting

- 165 The RFPA, the CPRC, and the spread of the truth (2)  
Rev. Angus Stewart

### Church and state

- 167 Another ruling for religious freedom  
Mr. Brian VanEngen

### Bring the books...

- 169 *A Survey of Church History* and  
*The English Reformation and the Puritans*  
Prof. Douglas Kuiper

### Activities

- 170 News from our churches  
Mr. Perry Van Egdom



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## Meditation

Rev. James Slopsema, minister emeritus in the Protestant Reformed Churches

# Seeking the city that continues

**Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp... for here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.**

**Hebrews 13:13-14**

One year comes to an end and another year begins.

The ending of the year reminds us of the end of all things and the final judgment. And we are instructed to be ready for the day of the Lord.

The beginning of the New Year also instructs us to look ahead. And it is well that we look beyond the final judgment all the way into eternity.

In eternity we have a city that continues, a city that endures and is eternal. Here, in this present world we have no continuing city. The word of God before us indicates that we seek that eternal city. Notice, that this is not an exhortation but a statement of fact concerning all true believers. Because of our imperfect faith there must also be an exhortation daily to seek this continuing city that is to come. This we must do during the New Year and until Christ comes. And that seeking must dominate our lives.

### A sharp contrast!

Here we have no continuing city.

There may be a reference here to the city of Jerusalem. Remember that the book of Hebrews was written to Hebrew Christians, some of whom were inclined to abandon the Christian faith in order to return to Judaism and the worship of the temple in Jerusalem. The theme of the book of Hebrews is that what these early Christians had in Jesus Christ is far superior to what could be found in Judaism with its earthly temple in Jerusalem. In keeping with that (although not mentioned in the book) Jerusalem and its temple were soon to be destroyed. Jesus Himself prophesied that the city of Jerusalem and the temple would be destroyed (Matt. 24:2). In AD 70 God destroyed the city and the temple by Roman legions. God did this in part as a judgment upon apostate Israel and in part because the earthly temple had lost its significance. It is very possible that the holy writer had the fall of Jerusalem in mind. Certainly the Jews have no continuing city.

But the reference is wider than the city of Jerusalem. The destruction of Jerusalem looked ahead to the end of the world and the destruction of all things. When Jesus spoke of the destruction of the temple, the disciples connected this to the end of the world and asked for the signs of Jesus' coming and the end of the world (Matt. 24:3). Jesus did not contradict this connection but gave them the signs of His coming. This indicates that the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem is a type or picture of the destruction of all things. From that point of view none of us has an enduring city here. All things earthly will one day come to an end, being consumed by fire—the city in which we live, our home, and our possessions. Our possessions and enjoyment of these things are probably even less enduring, since we lose them all in death. Should the Lord tarry, we will lose all things earthly in the day of our death.

In contrast, we have a continuing city beyond death.

The holy writer of this epistle has already described this continuing city in chapter 11 in connection with the faith of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

As they lived in the earthly Canaan, these patriarchs sought a city that has foundations, whose builder and maker is God (v. 10). All the cities built by men have no sure foundation. These are the foundations of human philosophy, politics, and effort. For that reason these cities shall certainly one day perish. But the city that God builds has a sure foundation—the blood of the cross of Jesus Christ. Thus it is the continuing city that has no end.

Furthermore, this continuing city is a heavenly city. According to verse 16 as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob sojourned in the earthly Canaan, they desired a better country, that is, a heavenly country in which God has prepared for them a city. This heavenly city is prepared not just for these three patriarchs but for all the true seed of Abraham with whom God has established His covenant (Gen. 17:7). And this true seed is known by their faith. All true believers in all ages are the true seed of Abraham from whom God has prepared this enduring, heavenly city.

This is a beautiful figure for the glories of heaven

that await us and all true believers in Jesus Christ. The Bible uses different figures to describe the glory of heaven, each figure emphasizing something different. It is referred to as the tabernacle of God, as Father's house of many mansions, as the heavenly Canaan, and as the New Jerusalem coming down from heaven.

Here the glories of heaven are referred to as a continuing city. This figure emphasizes some beautiful aspects of the glory of heaven. Even as a city is a community of people under one king or government, so also in heaven will there be the community of believers under the kingship of Jesus Christ. In this city or community all true believers will find the blessings of God in Jesus Christ as they have never experienced them before. In Jesus Christ they will enjoy perfect fellowship with God the Father through Jesus Christ. And in that fellowship they will enjoy loving fellowship among themselves as fellow citizens of the heavenly city. And of this glorious bliss there will be no end.

### **An important seeking!**

Here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come.

To seek something speaks of an earnest desire for something. It also implies that one does all in his power to attain the thing that he desires.

So also we seek the continuing city that is to come.

The "we" includes all the true seed of Abraham who have the same faith as Abraham.

The fact that the true believer seeks the heavenly city of God arises out of his faith.

Faith does not seek the things here below but the things that are above. That is, faith is not interested especially in things earthly and physical—earthly riches, pleasures, position, power, and so on. Faith is interested in the things that are eternal—the continuing city that God has reserved for His people in Jesus Christ with all its spiritual riches and pleasures. Faith is interested in the earthly only in so far as it is necessary to serve the Lord God and enjoy a foretaste of the eternal riches that are to come.

And so the believer is one who seeks the continuing city that is to come.

This leads the believer to go forth to Jesus Christ outside the camp.

This language draws our attention to the great Day of Atonement in the Old Testament, when the priest sacrificed a bull (for himself) and a goat (for the people), the blood of which was brought into the Most Holy Place for a sin offering. The bodies of these animals were taken outside the camp (later the city of Jerusalem) to be burned. The fact that these offerings were repeated

yearly indicated that they did not cover the sins of the people and make them holy to the Lord.

But Jesus has suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy through His blood (v. 12). He was crucified on Golgotha, a hill outside the city of Jerusalem. This was done purposefully to show that His crucifixion, by which He suffered the curse of God for the church, was the fulfillment of the Old Testament ceremony of the Day of Atonement.

On that basis, we are called to go forth to Jesus Christ outside the camp that we might become holy in the blood of the cross. This was a call to the Jews to leave the temple service in Jerusalem in order to cling by faith to Jesus Christ and His accursed death. And it is a call to all of us to cling by faith to the accursed death of Jesus Christ.

This is how we will attain the continuing city that is to come. Christ's death on the cross is the foundation of this continuing city. Only as we cling to the cross by faith and find ourselves sanctified in His blood will we one day enter into this city.

### **An important calling!**

This seeking of the eternal city of God must control our lives for the new year and for every year the Lord gives us during our earthly pilgrimage.

Interestingly, what is stated as a fact in this passage for the true believer is also given as an admonition in other passages, although using different language:

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth (Col 3:1-2).

Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you (Matt 6:31-33).

The necessity of these admonitions is the sad fact that the believer in weakness of faith does not always seek the things that are heavenly and eternal but the things here below. His desires are too much earthly and not enough heavenly. He becomes distracted by the things that perish, losing sight of the things that continue. This also hinders him from going outside the camp to be sanctified in the blood of the Lamb.

Let us this year and every year that remains live in the faith of our spiritual father Abraham, who looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.



## Editorial

Rev. Kenneth Koole, minister emeritus in the Protestant Reformed Churches

# Reflections as we await the coming year

Hatred.

War.

Lamentation.

Despair.

Not words found on too many year-end Christmas greeting cards, are they?

The words love, peace, joy, and hope? These dominate as the world looks towards a new year. But not their antonyms, that is for sure.

But it's hatred, war, lamentation, and despair that are loose in this world of sin and evil. These are what dominated AD 2018, and they will only intensify in the Year of Our Lord 2019.

Sorry to put such a sour ice-cube in mankind's New Year's martini, but that is how it was and will continue to be.

That is, until our Lord returns again as promised.

What dominated the American political scene and our society in 2018?

Hate and strife, and strife and hate. And do not say, "But it has always been that way—strife in politics, different agendas, the hurling of insults and invectives between supporters of opposing parties—politics as usual. Nothing new."

To be sure, hatred and strife in American politics are nothing new. There were times when political opponents settled their differences with pistol duels. And the newspapers with venom spewed slander against the candidates they disdained. But what we have been dealing with the past year is not "politics as usual." Over the last number of years the hatred has intensified; it is escalating. And it is only going to get worse.

Such gloom and doom, you say, as we face a new year. Was there not enough of that in the past year? Wouldn't it be more encouraging to put a happier, optimistic face on things? Give us a little encouragement, some reason for hope as we face the future.

I suppose one could, like the prophet Micaiah when demanded by King Ahab to prophecy concerning the coming battle against Ramoth-Gilead (and told by the king's servants to bring a good word or else!), say "Go,

and prosper: for the LORD shall deliver it into the hand of the king[!]" (I Kings 23:15). As if to say, "There! Feel better now?"

Sarcasm through and through, and Ahab knew it. He adjured Micaiah to tell him what God's true word was.

The next thing out of Micaiah's mouth was a sobering word of God's judgment upon Ahab's house, spouse, and Israel as well. "I saw all Israel scattered upon the hills, as sheep that have not a shepherd" (v. 17).

And that was the truth of it. Ahab did not return in peace but in a pool of his own blood, dying in his chariot. Israel suffered great defeat.

A dose of reality for an apostate nation, its king, and for a society filled with the abominable immoralities of Baal and its worship.

As for the righteous remnant? In the cross-hairs of Jezebel (the mother of all feminists and their liberal, diabolical agenda). A remnant struggling to survive and persevere, knowing that in time they could well suffer the fate of Naboth, put to death on trumped up charges for refusing to sell Ahab his vineyard, the *Lord's* inheritance.

Our age is similar.

Trying to put a happy-spin on things—"Let's just hope that our polarized society learns to get along"—is not going to change a thing.

There is hatred, and it runs deep in our society. If 2018 proved nothing else, it proved that.

And it was not simply an aversion to this maverick president of ours, Donald Trump, whose character and morals leave much to be desired. It goes deeper than that. That became evident this past summer in the confirmation hearings for a U.S. Supreme Court Justice. Talk about the assassination of a man's character. There was no depth to which the liberals would not stoop to prevent the nominee from being approved, even if it meant trumping up rape charges based on some doubtful, drunken memories of deeds alleged to have occurred some 40 years ago.

It was not simply that this fellow was the detested

President Trump's nominee. It was the record of his jurisprudence and his political affiliation in the past. The nominee, Justice Kavanaugh, had served as a counsellor for the recent Bush administration when it was considering amending the abortion laws and inserting a constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriages.

To our present society, those murderous laws and abominations have become sacrosanct. It is as in the days of Baal. Touch them not. To so much as suggest that our laws should forbid abortion on demand and same-sex marriage makes one the target of the Jezebels in our days. There is nothing to which this *growing segment of society* will not stoop to prevent one from testifying against, let alone destroying, their "bull-calves" (their Baals).

Yes, a "growing segment of our society." That's the alarming thing. That there is a growing segment of our society committed to legalizing every form of licentious behavior in the name of freedom and inalienable rights became plain in the national elections of 2018.

In the previous national elections of 2016, the conservative segment of our society gained some surprising victories, electing a legislative majority that seemed to promise the protection of our religious freedom and speech against sexual perversions, as well as the right to teach our children truth and righteousness according to our biblical convictions.

The national elections of 2018, however, speak of a reversal of that current. The narrow majorities that held sway in 2016 have evaporated, a thing of the past. The liberals, with a gain of some 40 seats, once more control the U.S. House of Representatives. And they have their eyes on greater gains in the year 2020.

Keep in mind, these are liberals who have no love for freedom of religious conviction. In fact, they hate such, and are committed to legalizing every sexual perversion known to man. And besides, they are committed not only to making it lawful to practice these insanities, but, by threat of severe penalty, to forbidding any testifying against them as well.

The next step? Forbidding any institution (including the Christian home) to teach its children (ours) that to despise the Creator's distinctions between male and female is sexual perversion and sin.

A vocal, anti-Christian segment of our society has become a majority, we fear, and one that will continue to grow. It is reported that in a number of States there was a spike in eighteen-year olds that registered to vote just prior to the elections, and it was their votes that sealed liberal victories.

That should not surprise us. We live in a society

whose public-school teachers come from universities dominated by socialistic, anti-Christian professors, places of toxic environment for even the most basic conservative values, to say nothing of Christian. It is these educators, indoctrinated by such professors, who for the past decades have been teaching the new voting generation.

What do we expect in future elections?

A member of my congregation just graduated from Grand Valley State University in Allendale, W. Michigan. Scarcely a liberal area on the geopolitical map. Yet he relates that one of the final instructions his education professor gave his class of prospective teachers was that their primary purpose was to inculcate social-justice into the minds of their students (read, equal-rights of behavior to those of the LGBT, etc. disposition). He then proceeded to urge them to be willing to break the laws and policies governing their schools to achieve this end. And this education professor is only one of thousands scattered throughout the colleges and universities of the Americas and Europe, you may be sure.

So, in the interests of inculcating sexual perversions into the minds of impressionable youth, lawlessness (social strife, *war!*) is openly promoted in institutions of education. This is academic freedom!

A society whose perspective is influenced and ruled by such educators (educators who have no more regard for the rights and lives of those who oppose their liberal, anti-biblical agenda than those of Nazi Germany) is a society filling up with hate towards those who would thwart their sexually unrestrained utopia—hatred and silencing of those who dare to dissent. And all in the name of love! Perverted love, that is.

As an aside—the legal victories those bakers of wedding cakes in the U.S. and in the UK had this past year, bakeries that refused to cater to homosexuals and their inscriptions, will be short-lived, we fear. What an amount of time, energy, finances, and courage it took to face down that leaven of evil with all its resources in these matters. Who dares go through such again?

Intimidation is the name of the game.

War.

And that is what is showing itself—warfare, a war that originates in "wickedness in high-places" (Eph. 6:12). It is the age-long war between the Dragon and The Seed of The Woman that we see coming to a head.

It is war against truth and righteousness. And in every facet of life. The most obvious lies and self-evident falsehoods are insisted upon as unchallengeable truths. And we speak of falsehoods so obvious that, in any other age, reasonable men (even unreasonable) would have laughed them out of school.

Case in point? Gender realities of male and female that, supposedly, can now be determined not by genetics and obvious physical realities, but by one's preference. What once would have been laughable is now taken seriously. And this in the (supposedly) most advanced scientific age for dealing with biological *facts*.

If a society can convince itself and pawn off such obvious nonsense (we are talking here of matters of Biology 101) as 'truth,' with which all must solemnly agree and maintain, then there is no lie or self-deception to which our society is incapable of being in bondage.

The past year has demonstrated that our society has, in its infatuation with sin and by the judgment of God, been given over to "strong delusion that they should believe a lie" (II Thess. 2:11).

What is so striking about the II Thessalonians passage is that the next verse speaks first of what God's purpose in all of this is, namely, that they might be damned (suffer final judgment) for believing not the truth (which they knew to be *the* truth); and then second, pointing out why they reject the truth and embrace the lie, namely, because they "had pleasure in unrighteousness!" (v. 12).

And that is our society. Nothing, not the truth staring them in the face, not the threat of damnation, will turn them from maintaining their lies. Why not? Because nothing is going to take from them the pleasures their unrighteous perversions give them.

Consider, not even God's temporal judgment of AIDS has deterred them. "We have developed medicines to counteract that to some degree. Nothing and nobody will deter us from besotting ourselves with sins! No, not though the rumbling of Sodom shake under our feet."

And headlong they proceed.

It has been war against truth and righteousness. It will continue unabated in the year 2019. Even in the face of God's judgments, they will continue dancing about their altars shouting "Baal, hear us!"

And God's judgments are falling on our increasingly lawless and anti-Christian society. Just in North America we have witnessed the hurricanes wreaking more and more destruction. The twenty-first century gives evidence of their increasing severity. The scientists themselves speak of changing weather patterns giving rise to such.

And do not ignore the upsurge of tornados raging across the heartland either.

The recent earthquake rocking Alaska, 7.1 on the Richter scale, followed by over a thousand smaller quakes, stirred up recollections of how many earthquakes of increasing magnitude there have been in re-

cent memory around the Pacific Ring. And of their devastation. Even the world is taking notice.

And then there were the fires burning throughout California and other parts of the West. Among the largest and most destructive on record. Talk about a sign of judgment, and one speaking of God's wrath in particular. Raging fire stands preeminent.

Let no one imagine these fires burning with consuming appetite were not judgments of God. It may have been human carelessness that sparked them. But the reason they raged with such intensity is because of years of drought, making everything tinder-dry, waiting for just one spark. And if there is one thing man does not control, it is the weather and its patterns. The will of the Creator is indisputably sovereign here.

And the result of these catastrophic events? Lamentation and sorrows as those affected view the ruin, loss, death, and devastation.

And we are speaking of just one section of this world, the wealthiest section. Even here lamentation and sorrow are not unknown. Now visit Africa and Asia, and view the results of famines and food shortages in large sections of those continents. Lamentation bordering on despair shows itself on an even larger scale.

What did we see in 2018? Man setting himself against God, and against truth and righteousness. Such men, according to Scripture, are without hope in this world. A world of despair.

We with our little ones live in such a world, facing a new year.

Without hope? In despair?

No! But with hope. Why?

Because our Christ Himself is a Man of War. Remember, He comes from a warrior line, David the warrior king.

It was exactly as such that the Old Testament prophets spoke of Him and the church looked for Him. Psalms 2 and 72 are cases in point (Psalter #'s 3 and 200). The great King who would crush His and the church's enemies once and for all, and thus have the victory, the final victories that would usher in the Kingdom of righteousness and peace.

Lord, haste the Day, cried the Old Testament church. And He came!

We must not think it is simply the Dragon and the world that are at war against the church, and we are suffering defeats. No! The great scion of David came. And as the Christ of the New Testament age He is marching—if you will, galloping to war against the gates and dungeons of hell. He is taking the battle to the enemy with a vengeance and having victories, millions of them over the New Testament age, delivering

and saving His own from Satan's clutches. Every one of these conversions a casting down of another citadel of Satan in an elect's heart.

Consider, Satan suffers defeat after gospel defeat. Our Christ has never lost one soul! Not one battle, one soul, if you will. And He never will, not the battle for your soul or mine, nor for that of any elect child across the face of the earth.

So, take heart in the face of the world's hatred, warfare, and strife. This coming year we face it—and those who display it—in the name of The King, the King of Righteousness and the Prince of Peace, the conquering King.

Theirs is the lamentation and the despair.

Ours the joy that goes with the one hope, sure and steadfast, that will never put to shame.



## Search the Scriptures

Mr. Don Doezema, member of Southwest Protestant Reformed Church in Wyoming, Michigan

### Upon this rock (36)

## A remnant returns (2)

Previous article in this series: December 15, 2018, p. 135.

“This people say, The time is not come, the time that the LORD's house should be built” (Hag. 1:2). The Jews knew exactly what the prophet was referring to. This had been their argument. “The time is not come. Sometime in the future, maybe, we can build the house of God. But not now. There is the decree of the king, you know. And times are tough. There are economic issues that make it inadvisable to carry on with so ambitious a project as building the house of the Lord *now*. Maybe later, when the economy is more favorable.”

(The Jews' priorities needed correcting—as do also, so often, our own. Forgetful of the fact that all of 'our' resources are really *His*, and that we are merely stewards, we easily rationalize the satisfying of our own 'needs'—at the expense of causes of the kingdom.)

God's answer? “Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your ceiled houses, and *this house* lie waste?” (Hag. 1:4). Yes, time and money there was aplenty to provide expensive cedar for the walls and ceilings of their own dwellings—while a bare altar was considered by them to suffice for their worship of God.

“Who is left among you that saw the house in her first glory?” asked Haggai the prophet. “And how do ye see it now? Is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing?” Ah, yes, that was the complaint of the old folks. “We don't have the resources!” God's answer? “Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, and be strong, O Joshua, and be strong all ye people of the land, for *I* am with

you, saith the LORD of hosts” (Hag. 2:1-5). No need, in other words, to depend on your *own* resources—when you can depend on...*Me!* (See also 2:8, where God reminds them that all the world's gold and silver belong to *Him*, and He could easily have *given* it to them—if He thought they needed it for this house!)

What made all this especially ironic was that, in their attempt to escape poverty by not using their wealth for the temple, they brought upon themselves the displeasure of God, which was manifest in...poverty. This reality was brought home to them forcefully by the prophet Haggai. “Ye have sown much,” he said, “and bring in little...and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes” (Hag. 1:6). Try as they might, in other words, they were unable to accumulate for themselves any wealth. “Ye looked for much,” the prophet continued, “and, lo, it came to little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why? saith the LORD of hosts. Because of mine house that is waste, and ye run every man unto his own house. Therefore the heaven over you is stayed from dew, and the earth is stayed from her fruit. And I called for a drought upon the land...and upon all the labor of the hands” (Hag. 1:9-11).

Mark the contrast between the attitude of these Jews and that of David with respect to the building of God's house. “See now,” David reasoned with Nathan, “I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth

within curtains” (II Sam. 7:2). The Jews of Zerubbabel’s day did not share that spirit.

The admonition of the Lord through the prophets bore fruit. Work on the rebuilding of the temple was renewed. The prophecy of Zechariah was that Zerubbabel, who had laid the foundation of the house, would also finish it (Zech. 4:9). And so it was. Four years later (Ezra 4:24 and 6:15) the house was finished (516 B.C.). The completion of the work was marked by dedication ceremonies that were held with great joy (6:16-18). And, shortly thereafter, the Jews celebrated the Passover Feast, the first to be held in the newly erected temple. This was likewise done with great joy, for, as the Lord had “turned the heart of the king of Assyria unto them” (6:22) so that they were *allowed* to finish the work, so also had the Spirit of the Lord worked in them the *desire* to finish the work (Hag. 1:14). “Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit...”

Which applies all the more to the building of the *real* temple (the church of Christ), of which spiritual reality the structure in Jerusalem was but an imperfect type.

Yes, an imperfect type. The renewal of the sacrifices on the great altar of burnt offering that stood before the rebuilt temple pointed to something better, to a deliverance of a different sort. Ezra discovered the need for that when, some eighty years after the return under Zerubbabel, he was authorized by Artaxerses to lead another band of exiles to Palestine.

On his arrival at Jerusalem, Ezra attended first to the delivery of the treasures he had been given for the service of God in the temple. Then he turned to the affairs of the colony. It seems that Ezra was not at first aware of any real problems in the colony. But there were God-fearing princes in Judea who knew that something surely was amiss. And, recognizing in Ezra a strong leader who would be able to do something to correct the evil and to avert the sure punishment of God, they brought the matter to his attention. They reported that some of the Jews had broken what was a clear commandment of God (Deut. 7:3, 4) forbidding intermarriage with their heathen neighbors. Ezra could hardly believe his ears. It had been the experience of the Jews in the past that this association with the heathen led inevitably to the introduction of *idolatry* into Israel—the very sin for which they had spent seventy years in

captivity in Babylon. Now they were *returning* to that grievous error. And not only were the common people guilty of this sin, but the priests and Levites too (Ezra 9:1), and “the hand of the princes and rulers hath been chief in this trespass” (9:2).

So overcome with grief and amazement and indignation was Ezra that he rent his clothes, plucked off his hair, and sat speechless, as one stunned, till the evening sacrifices (9:3, 4). Word of this soon spread, and serious-minded people began to gather around him. At the time of the evening sacrifice he arose and, in the hearing of the people, he prayed earnestly to the Lord (9:5-15). “O my God, I am ashamed...for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our trespass is grown up unto the heavens.... After all that is come upon us for our evil deeds and for our great trespass, seeing that thou...

hast given us such deliverance as this; should we again break thy commandments, and join in affinity with the people of these abominations?”

Ezra’s amazement is understandable of course. It does seem almost unbelievable that the Jewish people could fall so soon into their old ways. Two things, however, must be borne in mind. First, that though only a remnant had returned, we can be sure that even of that small remnant it could be said that “they are

not all Israel that are of Israel” (Rom. 9:6). Second, and more importantly, that we are no different. Do we not see *ourselves* in the waywardness of Israel? We, too, have by the grace of God been granted a great deliverance...and then fail to live a life of gratitude for so great a salvation. We see again the truth of what the apostle Paul wrote of the history of Old Testament Israel in I Corinthians 10:11: “Now all those things happened unto them for examples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.”

Next time: Jerusalem’s walls.

**Do we not see ourselves in the waywardness of Israel? We, too, have by the grace of God been granted a great deliverance and then fail to live a life of gratitude for so great a salvation. We see again the truth of I Corinthians 10:11: “Now all those things happened unto them for examples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.”**



## Believing and confessing

Rev. Rodney Kleyn, pastor of Covenant of Grace Protestant Reformed Church in Spokane, Washington

# Murder

### Lord's Day 40

Q. 105. What doth God require in the sixth commandment?

A. That neither in thoughts, nor words, nor gestures, much less in deeds, I dishonor, hate, wound, or kill my neighbor, by myself or by another; but that I lay aside all desire of revenge; also, that I hurt not myself, nor willfully expose myself to any danger. Wherefore also the magistrate is armed with the sword, to prevent murder.

Q. 106. But this commandment seems only to speak of murder?

A. In forbidding murder, God teaches us that He abhors the causes thereof, such as envy, hatred, anger, and desire of revenge; and that He accounts all these as murder.

Q. 107. But is it enough that we do not kill any man in the manner mentioned above?

A. No: for when God forbids envy, hatred, and anger, He commands us to love our neighbor as ourselves; to show patience, peace, meekness, mercy, and all kindness towards him, and prevent his hurt as much as in us lies; and that we do good, even to our enemies.

The word “kill” in this commandment refers specifically to the act of murder, which is taking another’s life unlawfully and with premeditation. However, this commandment also applies to words, thoughts, gestures, and even facial expressions. This is Jesus’ point when, in Matthew 5, He says that we are guilty of murder already when we are angry with our brother without a cause or call him a fool.

We should expect that this commandment, like all the others, will expose our depravity, rebuke us for sin, and call us to love and gratitude. There are deeds (and thoughts) that we need to mortify as we learn what this commandment means. Are you ready to do that?

Jesus died for the sin of murder— not only the murderous sin of those who killed Him (Luke 23:34; Acts 2:23), and not only for some murderers on death row, but also for our sin of murder, that is, for us as murderers.

### Underlying principles

Behind this commandment, as with all the commandments, are certain principles.

A principle is a foundational truth that never changes—it holds true for all peoples at all times and in every age. Principles have their origin in God and in His Word—both of which are immutable and eternal. In these principles, the law is a revelation of God’s own character.

These are the principles behind the commandment, “Thou shalt not kill!”

1. **God is a living God** (Heb. 11:6). Though we need God and depend on Him for life, He does not need us or depend on us. He is the eternal, self-existent God whose name is “I AM.” In His eternal triune life, He has fullness and perfection of life. Without this principle, there could be no commandment concerning human life.

2. **God the Creator gives life.** Scripture begins

with an enormous contrast: “In the beginning God created....” God is eternal, but everything else is made and has a beginning. Nothing has life, and nothing can live, except God gives it life and existence. As Creator, God is also the One who in His providence sustains us. “He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things...and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation...though he be not far from every one of us: for in him we live, and move, and have our being...for we are also his offspring” (Acts 17:25-28).

**3. God is sovereign over life and death.** The “right-to-life,” as well as the “choice” to terminate life, belong to God and not to man. Human life, both in its beginning and in its ending, is never an accident. “I kill, and I make alive” (Deut. 32:39). God appoints a man’s days, determines who will live, how long each will live, and when the end of a man’s days will be. This is our confession in Psalm 31:15, “My times are in thy hand.”

**4. Human life is different than animal life.** This is very obvious in the creation account, where man is made in the image of God after a divine consultation (Gen. 1:25-27) and when God by a two-part act of creation makes man body and soul (Gen. 2:7). There is an eternal aspect in man in which he stands as creature in relation to his Creator.

**5. Life, for man, consists of relationships.** God came in the beginning and walked and talked with Adam. God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone.” Within every one of us is an innate longing for companionship. The entire law governs our relationships, each commandment addressing an aspect of our love either for God or for the neighbor.

## Sins prohibited

This commandment does not forbid all killing. In Genesis 9:6, the LORD says to Noah, “Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.” This passage points, not only to the value of human life, but also to what must be done to those who commit murder. Romans 13:4 instructs us to honor civil authorities as appointed by God, and to be afraid of them if we do evil for “he beareth not the sword in vain” but is a “minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.” A sword is an instrument of death—one does not beat people with a sword, he kills them. God has given this power to the civil authority in order to curb evil. This power of the sword applies also to situations of war and defense, when life is threatened.

The fact that Scripture does not forbid all killing points us to a deeper understanding of the command-

ment. It is not simply about the act of killing, but is about murder that springs from hatred in the heart of man. From the beginning, after man’s fall into sin, murder has been in the heart of man. Genesis 4 records the first death, of Abel, which was the result of murder. In the same chapter Lamech boasts of murdering a man. When, according to Genesis 6, God is ready to destroy the world with the flood, the earth is described as “filled with violence.” This story of man continues through Scripture in Joseph’s brothers, Pharaoh, Saul, Ahab, Manasseh, Herod, the unbelieving Jews who crucified the Savior, and many more. Today, if we pick up the paper, we read the same sad stories of violence and murder. This is the stuff that entertains and becomes an electronic game. This has been legalized in the killing of the unborn and endorsed in “death with dignity.” So desensitized to it are we that a murder must be extreme or serial before it captures our attention.

The application of this commandment is particularly penetrating when we consider what Jesus says about murder in Matthew 5:22 and the surrounding passage: “I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.”

Children are very honest and so often you will hear them calling each other names, but adult refinement in speech, which sometimes praises and flatters, is often just a cover-up for the same murderous attitudes. An angry look, a frustrated glare, a rude gesture, body language that turns away, evil thoughts, bitterness, jealousy, envy, seeking revenge, despising another within—these all are murder because, like lust which leads to the act of adultery, these are the cause and origin of murder. No one ever murdered without first thinking a hateful or envious thought.

In forbidding murder, God requires the preservation of life, that we do all within our power to care for the life that God has given, and which is His prerogative to take. This includes not only care for others, but also personal care. The believer’s body is “the temple of the Holy Spirit,” and so, though we are not to make an idol of ourselves, we also should not harm or abuse our bodies, particularly with substances or recreations that put our health and life in danger.

## Love prescribed

The opposite to murder in the heart is love.

The love required here is first that we put others before ourselves. This love is praised throughout Scripture, and is the love that the Savior demonstrates in lay-

ing down His life for His sheep. In love we will “esteem others better than ourselves,” will put their needs before our own, will keep no record of wrong, will be patient, kind and humble, bearing, believing, hoping and enduring all things.

Second, the love required is a spiritual care for the souls of others. This is the way we will truly love our children, not merely by feeding their hungry mouths, but by nurturing their needy souls.

Such love is our duty toward every person whom God puts in our path, and so the Bible speaks of family love, love for the brethren, loving our neighbors, and loving our enemies.

The possibility of such love is the experience of God’s love. One who knows God, and in whom God dwells, will and does love his brother. God has loved me, by nature His enemy and certainly undeserving, and so I must love.

### Questions for Discussion

1. What is the meaning of the name Jehovah, and how does that relate to this commandment?
2. What does it mean that God is sovereign? How does this apply to the commandment concerning life and death? Think also of God’s sovereign providence which puts others in your life.
3. Does this commandment forbid all killing? If not, give some examples of lawful killing. Can these be justified from Scripture?
4. List some of the different forms of murder forbidden by this commandment. Are you guilty of many of these?
5. What are the causes of murder listed in the Catechism? What evil lusts, and emotions lead to murder? Do you think you are capable of murder?
6. Prove from Scripture that hatred is a form of murder. Also, demonstrate from Scripture that hatred leads to the act of murder.
7. What consolation is there in knowing that Jesus also died for murderers? Could you forgive a murderer and receive him into fellowship in the church?
8. What is the positive requirement of this commandment? What are some ways that we are called to show this to our neighbors and even enemies (cf. Matt. 5:43-48; Rom. 12:19-21)?
9. If murder begins in the heart, what, besides suicide, are some other forms of self-murder? What is the answer to these?
10. If you knew someone who was contemplating an abortion, how would you counsel them, lovingly, from God’s Word?
11. If you knew someone who was suffering severely from a terminal illness and simply wanted to take his/her own life, what would you say to him/her, and how would you explain his/her suffering to him/her?
12. Who demonstrated the greatest love ever shown to enemies? What can we learn from this about how we ought to love one another? Find some Scripture passages to support your answer.



## Things which must shortly come to pass

Prof. David Engelsma, professor emeritus of Dogmatics and Old Testament in the Protestant Reformed Seminary

### Premillennialism (23) Fundamental Reformed critique of premillennialism (5)

Previous article in this series: December 1, 2018, p. 110.

**“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.”**

**I Peter 2:9**

#### Introduction

As the previous article in this series indicated, the founding fathers of dispensational premillennialism divided the people of God into two groups: national Israel of the Jews, and the largely Gentile church.

Contemporary, self-styled “moderate” premillennialists exert themselves to leave the impression with covenant theologians that they—the premillennialists—now recognize a certain oneness of the two, different peoples of God. Almost humorously, this concession by leading premillennialists is hailed by some covenant theologians as a tremendous breakthrough in the controversy between premillennialism and covenant theology. These covenant theologians regard this concession on the part of premillennialists as opening the way to ecumenical relations between the churches holding the two theologies concerning Israel and the church. High-powered ecumenical conferences are being held between Presbyterian and dispensational theologians. Reports of the meetings celebrate a meeting of the minds and suggest a genuine oneness of amillennial and premillennial theologies.

In reality, the Presbyterian amillennialists are willingly being duped by their dispensational counterparts, and Presbyterian and Reformed churches are opening themselves up to the false doctrine of premillennialism.

Recognition of a certain oneness of Israel and the church on the part of dispensational premillennialism is akin to a grudging admission of a certain rotation of the earth around the sun in the sphere of science, when one has in the past vehemently contended for the rotation of the sun around the earth, and is still determined to hold on to the scientific error, regardless of powerful pressure to repudiate it.

Pursuing this comparison, and playing off Galileo’s forced confession that the sun rotates around the earth, I note that contemporary premillennialists rise from their ecumenical knees, on which they have acknowledged a certain oneness of Israel and the church, muttering, “Nevertheless, Israel and the church are fundamentally and everlasting two different peoples of God.”<sup>1</sup>

Premillennialism, whether traditional or contemporary, extreme or “moderate,” is, essentially, the division of the one people of God into two different groups: Israel and the church. This division of the people of God is premillennialism’s fundamental error—and sin. It is this error that spawns premillennialism’s false and foolish eschatology. There must be a millennium in the earthly future so that the nation of Israel may enjoy carnal peace, prosperity, and power, supposedly promised the nation in the Old Testament. At any moment, the church will be raptured off the earth, so that God may establish Israel once again as His kingdom, which implies that the church is not the kingdom.

#### The “moderating” of dispensationalism’s division of the people of God

In recent years, more “moderate” dispensational premillennialists have tried to distance themselves from the crass and plainly unbiblical division of the people of God by their theological and spiritual fathers. These “moderates” try to leave the impression with covenant theologians that they—the premillennialists—do now recognize a certain oneness of the peoples of God.

Robert Saucy has written that the traditional dispensational doctrine “that divided the people of God into an earthly and heavenly people (that is, Israel and the church), with fundamentally no continuity in

<sup>1</sup> When the scientist Galileo rose from his knees, upon which he had been forced by the Roman Catholic Church to acknowledge that the sun rotated around the earth, contrary to his scientific discovery that the earth rotates around the sun, he is said to have asserted, quietly, “Nevertheless, the earth does rotate around the sun.”

the plan of God on the historical plane, must be rejected.”<sup>2</sup>

Bruce A. Ware asserts that the traditional dispensational view of the “relation of the new covenant to Israel and the church as distinct peoples of God under distinct new covenants is...rendered unacceptable.” He continues: “Israel and the church are in one sense a *united people* of God (they participate in the same new covenant).”<sup>3</sup>

The editors of another volume that advances the contemporary, “moderate” premillennial doctrine propose “a revision in the dispensational view. There are important distinctions between Israel and the church... but there are also real theological connections that link them together in ways not expressed previously in dispensational thought.”<sup>4</sup>

Even Charles C. Ryrie, formerly a premillennial hard-liner of the old school, pressing the difference between Israel and the church to the extreme, now concedes some “relationships” between Israel and the church, although every such concession includes a reaffirmation of the difference between the two peoples of God. Typical is what Ryrie has written in his authoritative *Dispensationalism Today*:

While emphasizing the distinctiveness of the Church, the dispensationalist also recognizes certain relationships which the Church sustains. He does not say that there is no kingdom today, but insists that it is not the fulfillment of Old Testament kingdom promises.<sup>5</sup>

## The division of the people of God by “moderate” premillennialism

But the effort of the contemporary dispensationalists

2 Robert Saucy, in *Prophecy and the Church*, quoted in John H. Gerstner, *Wrongly Dividing the Word of Truth: A Critique of Dispensationalism* (Brentwood, TN: Wolgemuth & Hyatt, 1991), 208.

3 Bruce A. Ware, “The New Covenant and the People(s) of God,” in *Dispensationalism, Israel and the Church*, ed. Craig A. Blaising and Darrell L. Bock (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 92, 96.

4 Craig A. Blaising and Darrell L. Bock, “Dispensationalism, Israel and the Church: Assessment and Dialogue,” in *Dispensationalism, Israel and the Church*, 377.

5 Charles C. Ryrie, *Dispensationalism Today* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1965), 154. The implication of this seemingly concessive statement must not be missed. Contrary to the original premillennial theology, there is a kingdom of God in the world today, namely, the church. But it is not the kingdom prophesied in the Old Testament. That kingdom, of course, is national Israel in the coming millennium. There are, therefore, for premillennialism *two* distinct, different kingdoms of God. In every important aspect of the gospel, premillennialism wrests asunder that which God has unified. Dispensational premillennialism is a divisive, schismatic, false religion.

to “moderate” the division between and separation of Israel and the church is both deceptive and unsuccessful. The division of God’s people into two different groups is of the essence of dispensational premillennialism. To confess the oneness of the people of the one God in the one Savior Jesus Christ by the one Holy Ghost would be to renounce, abandon, and condemn as heresy dispensationalism itself. This would be to convert to amillennialism. And this, the “moderates” are no more inclined to do than were the traditionalists.

The same Robert Saucy who calls for the rejection of the traditional dispensational doctrine “that divided the people of God into an earthly and heavenly people” reaffirms the division by acknowledging “*functional* distinctions between Israel and the other nations in the future.” The salvation of the church “is not the completion of the mystery of God’s salvation program for the world.” The completion will be “a future work with Israel,” that is, the millennium of an earthly reign of national Israel.<sup>6</sup>

The same Bruce Ware who finds unacceptable the traditional dispensational doctrine that Israel and the church are two, distinct peoples and who affirms that “Israel and the church are in one sense a *united people* of God” continues, *in the same sentence*, by declaring that “in another sense they remain separate in their identity and so comprise *differing peoples* of God.” Which sense is the more important to him, Ware indicates by the title of his article: “The New Covenant and the People(s) [plural—DJE] of God.”<sup>7</sup>

In contradiction of their claim that their “progressive,” “moderate” form of dispensationalism “rejects the notion of two peoples,” Blaising and Bock conclude by acknowledging that “the Israel-church distinction” consists of “two dispensational groupings of humanity.” The “groupings” continue in the future, for in a coming earthly millennium Israel has a “future” as a “nation.” Such is the commitment to the restoration of an earthly kingdom of Israel on the part of the editors of the book that is supposed to put the best foot of contemporary, “moderate” premillennialists forward, that they defend the abomination of a reintroduction of animal sacrifices to God in the millennial kingdom of the Jews.<sup>8</sup>

So immoderate regarding the fundamental differences between amillennialism and premillennialism are the reputed “moderate” premillennialists that they reaffirm the very worst aspects of dispensationalism and those

6 Robert L. Saucy, “The Church as the Mystery of God,” in *Dispensationalism, Israel and the Church*, 155.

7 Ware, “The New Covenant,” in *Dispensationalism, Israel and the Church*, 96.

8 Blaising and Bock, “Dispensationalism,” in *Dispensationalism, Israel and the Church*, 377-394.

elements that are most objectionable to the Reformed amillennialist: the renewal of animal sacrifices in the worship of God in a rebuilt material temple in Jerusalem.<sup>9</sup> How conservative evangelicals and Presbyterians can claim ecumenical oneness with men and churches thus maintaining this denial of the cross of Jesus Christ is mind-boggling. And revelatory!

As for Charles Ryrie, his vague reference to some “relationship” between Israel and the church is obliterated by his insistence that “a dispensationalist keeps Israel and the Church distinct.” This distinction is eternal. Ryrie quotes Daniel Fuller with approval: “The basic premise of Dispensationalism is two purposes of God expressed in the formation of two peoples who maintain their distinction throughout eternity.”<sup>10</sup>

9 Blaising and Bock, *Dispensationalism*, 390, 391. The writers deny that the restoration of animal sacrifices in the millennium would be a return to “weak and beggarly elements,” as the apostle charges in Galatians 4:9. They deny that the “possibility of [the restoration of animal sacrifices is] automatically excluded.” They want to allow for the restoration of animal sacrifices in an earthly temple in Jerusalem as part of the “restoration of all things” promised in Acts 3:21.

10 Ryrie, *Dispensationalism Today*, 44, 45.

## For all dispensational premillennialists, two different peoples

For dispensational premillennialism, whether traditional or “moderate,” Israel and the church are two sharply divided peoples. The former is the kingdom of God, and the latter is not. The church is the body and bride of Jesus Christ, and Israel is not.

In time and in eternity, God has two different and divided peoples.

Even if, as a few of the braver “moderates” dare to affirm, the two peoples enter into a certain (tenuous) union after the millennium, they forever remain distinct: Israel of the Jews as the kingdom of God in the new world, over there; the church composed mostly of Gentiles, here.

This rending asunder of the people of God in Jesus Christ, which is fundamental to premillennialism in all its shades and forms and which explains premillennialism’s foolish eschatology, is false doctrine.

This, I will demonstrate in the next installment in this series on the millennium.

(to be continued)



## When thou sittest in thine house

Mrs. Margaret Laning, wife, mother, and grandmother in Hull Protestant Reformed Church of Hull, Iowa

## The lines are fallen unto me

Psalm 16 is called, “A Michtam of David.” “The LORD is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot. The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage” (Ps. 16:5, 6). Michtam means contemplation, and these words are worth contemplating often. This is a happy, hopeful contemplation, is it not? What an inheritance God has promised! Surely, our cup runneth over. We and our believing children are adopted by God and heirs of a staggering, unheard of, massive inheritance. Nothing is greater than our portion—the presence and blessing of God in His eternal kingdom. Are you not stunned by the scope of it?

Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah certainly were. Albeit these five young sisters lived long before

Psalm 16, they lived with the truth of it deep in their hearts. Though spiritual, heavenly riches are eternal and beyond measure, Old Testament Israel lived in a time of pictures, casting of lots, and measuring lines. God promised to give Abraham and his future seed a land forever (Gen. 13:15). The word *forever* helps in understanding that the earthly picture (a place in the land of Canaan) was typical and pointed to the reality (a place in God’s heavenly, everlasting kingdom). The sisters firmly believed they would receive both.

From the tribe of Manasseh, possibly in their teens, the sisters are recorded in three different accounts. They represented a new generation of Israel ready to take the promised land of Canaan. Perhaps you have teens at home and can direct them to learn from their example.

Here are just a few virtues worth noting: their faith and trust in God; the honor they showed their father and officebearers; their submission, contentment, and their importunity. By God's grace, their commendable conduct was inseparably connected with keeping a single eye on their portion in Christ.

The sisters are first mentioned in the book of Numbers after a new census was taken to determine the size of the tribes for the dividing of the land. The first census was no longer accurate. The previous generation had perished in the wilderness because of unbelief and disobedience. However, this second census revealed to the sisters that they had a predicament. Ask your child if he or she has ever waited in line to receive a piece of candy but was passed over while all the others received theirs. Well, the sisters had a somewhat similar situation, but on a much larger scale, of course.

Their father, Zelophehad, and most likely their mother, already died in the wilderness. The census revealed none of their father's children would receive a possession in the promised land because Zelophehad had no sons. This meant their father's name would be scratched from among his family—disinherited.

Sometimes the Lord has us go through circumstances that seem unresolvable. What our life is now is not what we envisioned it to be. The daughters of Zelophehad may have been tempted to backslide into bitter hopelessness. By God's grace, they did not fall into that. They were from a believing family and trusted in the Lord's unfailing promises. In all our struggles and trials, good times and bad, may we remember the same.

The daughters of Zelophehad trusted God. They sought help from divinely appointed officebearers, just as we do in the church of Jesus Christ today. They did not come to demand their rights as feminists do. Actually, no one had rights to the land. It was the Lord's and for Him to give freely through the casting of lots. God determined the boundary lines whether large or small, north or south. He graciously portions and maintains our lot in life, too, in which we learn contentment and trust. Trust is why the sisters went to the messengers of God. They did not take matters into their own hands by simply informing the leaders that they were going to stake a piece of land on their own. They trusted God to speak and come to their aide through these men. This was exactly what took place:

And they stood before Moses, and before Eleazar the priest, and before the princes and all the congregation, by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, saying, Our father died in the wilderness, and he was not in the company of them that gathered themselves

together against the LORD in the company of Korah; but died in his own sin, and had no sons. Why should the name of our father be done away from among his family, because he hath no son? Give unto us therefore a possession among the brethren of our father. And Moses brought their cause before the LORD. And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, The daughters of Zelophehad speak right: thou shalt surely give them a possession of an inheritance among their father's brethren; and thou shalt cause the inheritance of their father to pass unto them. And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If a man die, and have no son, then ye shall cause his inheritance to pass unto his daughter (Num. 27:2-8).

The daughters of Zelophehad honored their father and officebearers. This was not a victory for a women's movement that pushes around men. If they had come to Moses in a contentious way, the meeting would have gone quite differently. Had they chosen to stir up the people by accusing their leaders of being unfaithful or railing on them for their lack of wisdom and foresight, it would not have had a good outcome. Rather, the sisters showed respect. They honored their deceased father by ensuring his name would be listed among those who had a name and a place in the land. When his daughters bore future sons, their sons would be recorded as sons of Zelophehad rather than from the paternal side. Further, the sisters made clear their father played no part in Korah's rebellion. Those who followed Korah were disinherited.

An example of the opposite of honoring those in authority is the story of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram to which the daughters refer in Numbers 16. Unlike Zelophehad's family, these men undermined the authority of Moses and Aaron by stirring up the people with their false accusations. Men of renown joined the schism, some 250 princes of the assembly. Moses summoned Dathan and Abiram to a meeting but they refused to appear. They needed to repent. Ongoing repentance is crucial in our own life. For we are not relying on God's promises when we are refusing to obey His commands.

The daughters of Zelophehad were submissive and content. If some wrongly conclude that Numbers 27 promotes feminism, Numbers 36 is altogether different. The men of Manasseh met with Moses and the leaders regarding the new inheritance law because they saw a problem. If a land-owning daughter marries a man from another tribe, her land would then be taken from Manasseh's inheritance and given to the other tribe. Once again Moses sought the Lord and another law was made. "Let them marry to whom they think best; only to the family of the tribe of their father shall they marry" (Num. 36:6). Did the sisters argue, claiming their rights? Maybe they

had an eye on a young man from Asher or Zebulun, but we are not told. Rather, they submitted with contentment and married their father's brothers' sons. All five of them did. Perceived restriction is a mercy if it comes from God's Word. In His kindness He does not deprive us. We shall inherit *all* things. Marry only in the Lord is a commandment of God. Yes, our young people must search from a relatively small number, but by faith we know this is good for us.

The daughters of Zelophehad showed importunity—an important aspect of prayer. “God will give His grace and Holy Spirit to those only who with sincere desires continually ask them of Him, and are thankful for them” (Heidelberg Catechism, Q&A 116). As Joshua led the Israelites into battle, the sisters waited and watched in awe as God's promises were being fulfilled. They came to their leaders once again and said, “... The Lord commanded Moses to give us an inheritance among our brethren” (Josh. 17:4). Moses had died and years had passed. Their hope had not dimmed in the least. They persevered with the same importunity as father Jacob when he wrestled with the Lord saying, “I will not let thee go, except thou bless me” (Gen. 32:26). Joshua gave them the land.

Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah were quite young in age, but will always be remembered as godly examples who kept a single eye on the Lord's

promised inheritance. May this encourage our young people to pray for such grace in a day of self-centeredness and carnality. A goodly heritage is ours. We are currently being fit for a precise place in His kingdom. The more we long for the full realization of it when Jesus returns, the less we yearn for the things of this world—and that is a good thing.

We want to have thankful children, do we not? Like the daughters of Zelophehad, we must keep talking about our promised inheritance in Christ. Has your child been called cruel names, experienced fear, or loneliness? In Christ we have an everlasting name in whom we have perfect peace and safety. One of the very first verses our young ones learn is, “The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want” (Ps. 23:1). “I shall not want” means—I lack nothing! He is our rich portion all the time, including difficult times. He never changes and our portion is never lost.

Psalm 16 is a happy, hopeful contemplation. “I have set the LORD always before me.... Therefore my heart is glad...” (Ps. 16:8, 9). With gladness in your heart sing Psalter 27:

The Lord is my inheritance, the Lord alone remains the fullness of my cup of bliss; the Lord my lot maintains.

The lines are fallen unto me in places large and fair; a goodly heritage is mine, marked out with gracious care.



## Reformed Free Publishing Association Annual meeting

Rev. Angus Stewart, pastor of the Covenant Protestant Reformed Church in Ballymena, Northern Ireland

# The RFPA, the CPRC and the spread of the truth (2)

Previous article in this series: December 15, 2018, p. 141.

### Translations

A number of people ask about the translations that are on the Covenant PRC website ([www.cprf.co.uk/languages.htm](http://www.cprf.co.uk/languages.htm)), so let me tell you first how this foreign language witness started.

The translations began in large part as a response to criticism. It was said, scurrilously, that our congregation in Northern Ireland was merely Dutch or merely American, as if God's truth were nationalistic and not

heavenly! So we decided to demonstrate the catholicity of our apostolic faith and spread the Word further.

A key person in this is Felipe Sabino, a brother from Brazil, who for many years has translated a lot of Reformed material into Portuguese, including Protestant Reformed literature. Here is a quote that he thought may be useful for the RFPA Annual Meeting:

Since I have come to know the Reformed faith, books have been a very important means by which I have grown

in the knowledge of the Word of God. Knowing how much material there was in English, I started translating into Portuguese so that as many people as possible would be able to benefit from the excellent books that I was reading. Those written by Prof. Herman C. Hanko are the first ones to come to my mind. I have translated a great deal of the RFPA's materials and they are all available on my website, which, by God's grace, has become one of the most accessed websites of Reformed theology in Portuguese. This work has grown into a publishing house and we have already had the opportunity to publish at least one RFPA book in Portuguese and we hope to do more. My prayer is that God may be glorified through it. Making good theology available has been fundamental in the work of Reformation in Brazil. We pray to God to keep blessing our efforts, as well as those of our brothers in the RFPA.

The CPRC translations webpage started with Portuguese translations by Felipe Sabino, plus Protestant Reformed translations which were on [www.prca.org](http://www.prca.org) and other websites that I located through search engines. Then we added online versions of our creeds in different languages: the Ecumenical creeds and the "Three Forms of Unity" (the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism and the Canons of Dordt). From these very humble and small beginnings, we are now approaching 2,600 translations in about 130 languages.

So how does the RFPA help with this translation work? First, it contributes some of the materials that are translated: excerpts from the RFPA's books and *Standard Bearers*. Other translated Protestant Reformed materials include pamphlets, essays from the *Protestant Reformed Theological Journal*, articles from the *Beacon Lights*, Reformed Witness Hour sermons, our catechism books, our Reformed forms for baptism and the Lord's Supper, etc., and even some reading sermons! Our translation webpage also includes "Covenant Reformed News" articles, pieces from the *British Reformed Journal*, BRF books and so on.

Second, the RFPA assists us by providing some of the books that we mail as a thankyou to our translators. Sometimes when we post the books to a translator, especially if he or she is in North America or South America, I will ask Paula Kamps to mail the books directly from the RFPA.

### Accuracy of our translations

A very natural question and one I often hear is, How do we know that these translations are accurate? My answer comes in many parts.

First, some of the translations on our website are

(lawful) copies of the standard online versions of the Ecumenical creeds, the "Three Forms of Unity," and our Reformed liturgical forms. This takes care of about 400 of our translations.

Second, other materials on our website have been overseen by or obtained through various Protestant Reformed bodies. The RFPA itself has provided us with Russian translations of *Doctrine According to Godliness*, *The Voice of Our Fathers* and *Hyper-Calvinism and the Call of the Gospel* (the latter is ongoing), and the Slovakian of *Marriage, the Mystery of Christ and the Church*. We have several pamphlets in Spanish produced under the auspices of the Evangelism Committee of Holland PRC. We gained some Korean translations of *Standard Bearer* pieces through brethren who are friends of Prof. Ron Cammenga and Rev. Bill Langerak. We reckon that this warrants our confidence in the accuracy of a few more score of our translations.

Third, many of our translations have been produced by members of our own churches or sister churches. Our webpage contains many translations in Dutch and Spanish by members of the PRC. Saints in the CPRC and the Limerick Reformed Fellowship (Ireland) have produced translations in Albanian, French, German, Greek, Irish and Italian. We can stand over these. The Covenant Evangelical Reformed Church (CERC) in Singapore has produced Chinese translations, which they have sent to us electronically. Members in the Protestant Reformed Churches in the Philippines (PRCP) have helped us with Tagalog translations.

Fourth, we have translations on our website from brethren in other bodies that have close links with us. We have some German translations from saints in the BERG, a congregation in Gießen, that is pastored by Dr. Jürgen Klautke, who has spoken for the PRC and who is in touch with the PRC Contact Committee. We have over fifty articles and over a hundred audios by Rev. Titus in Burmese. Pastor Titus was trained by Rev. Jason Kortering, and he and his congregation in Myanmar have been visited over many years by delegations from Michigan's Hope PRC. Last time I saw John VanBaren, one of Hope's elders, he gave me a memory stick containing many more translations and audios by Rev. Titus. Once our whole website is revamped, my wife, Mary, plans to add these to our Burmese page.

Fifth, I have met other translators personally, either in Northern Ireland or at BRF conferences or in their own country. I am thinking here of translators who have rendered our works into Dutch, Hungarian, Italian, Romanian and Portuguese, both from Portugal and Brazil.

Sixth, there are other trustworthy men and women with whom I have had online contact for several years,

including saints in South Africa (Afrikaans) and a sister in the Philippines who has sent us a number of Hiligaynon translations.

Seventh, there are other languages in which we have two or more people who can check each other's work. This holds for our translations, for example, in German, Hungarian, Indonesian, Italian, Russian, Portuguese, Spanish and even Swahili! To give a more concrete example, a brother in Germany translated the Belgic Confession into Armenian, the first time, I believe, it had been rendered into that language. I sent the opening articles of the translation to a Christian lady in Northern Ireland who is from Armenia, so that she could look over it. She said it was a good translation, though she did recommend a few improvements, which the brother implemented.

Eighth, our translations are self-correcting to some degree. Maybe it is a bit like Wikipedia in this regard, although Wikipedia has a lot more pages and readers than we have! There have been people who have notified us of mistakes in the translations and we have made the corrections. This even happens with our English articles, for typos are hard to eliminate in any language! I also recall an instance when I removed a translation (in Swahili) at the recommendation of a man whom I

judged dependable. The brother from Kenya informed me that the quality of the translation was too low.

There is one final and highly significant factor. We do not give our translators money. If we did, we would run the risk of someone doing sloppy work merely for the cash. Instead, we give our translators books, including RFPA books. What use are our books to those who have no interest in the truth or who disagree with us theologically?

It would take a very high degree of malice and duplicity for someone to take the time deliberately to mistranslate, say, a *Standard Bearer* article in order to deceive people who would read it on our website. We believe in total depravity, but most people also operate according to a degree of self-interest. Besides, the corrupted translation would have to be in a language that we could not check beforehand. Even if such a translation did make it onto our website, eventually someone would probably notify us of its errors and we would remove it.

Apart from God's Word, there is nothing in our fallen world that is infallible. We are content that we are taking reasonable precautions and that these translations are a blessing to saints all around the world in many languages.

(to be concluded)



## Church and state

Mr. Brian VanEngen, member of the Protestant Reformed Church of Hull, Iowa, is a practicing attorney

# Another ruling for religious freedom

As was discussed in a recent issue of the *Standard Bearer*, the United States Supreme Court recently ruled that the Colorado Civil Rights Commission was incorrect in finding a baker violated the civil rights of a gay couple by refusing to bake them a cake celebrating their same-sex marriage.<sup>1</sup> The Supreme Court of the United Kingdom (UK) has now issued a ruling in a similar case, *Lee v. Ashers Baking Company*.<sup>2</sup> Although the facts of the two cases are similar, the courts used very different approaches in reaching the same ultimate outcome. The

reasoning used by the Court in the *Ashers Baking* case is worthy of closer examination.

The facts of the *Ashers Baking* case are as follows. Daniel and Amy McArthur, who operate the bakery, are evangelical Christians and the bakery is a family business. The name of the bakery itself is derived from the biblical reference in Genesis 49:20, where Jacob was addressing his sons and stated that "Out of Asher his bread shall be fat, and he shall yield royal dainties." Gareth Lee, a homosexual activist, requested that the bakery make a cake with the characters Ernie and Bert from the children's show Sesame Street and the words "Support Gay Marriage." The bakers refused to make the cake, saying that could not because of their religious beliefs.

1 Brian K. Van Engen, "The Other Side of the Coin (2)," *Standard Bearer*, Vol. 95 No. 1, October 1, 2018, 19-20.

2 *Lee v Ashers Baking Company Ltd & Ors* (Northern Ireland) [2018] UKSC 49 (10 October 2018), United Kingdom Supreme Court.

The owners of the bakery were alleged to have violated Mr. Lee's rights under the Fair Employment and Treatment Order (FETO), and the Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (SOR). These laws prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation or on political or religious beliefs. The County Court found that the bakery had violated these provisions and fined them £500 (about 650 U.S. dollars). In some cases involving claims of religious right of conscience, the court weighs the protections against discrimination found in the FETO and SOR against the protections of freedom of religion and freedom of expression provided to religious individuals under Articles 9 and 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). In the *Ashers* case, the court found that the bakery had engaged in direct discrimination, and that it therefore did not have to consider the baker's religious beliefs. The McArthurs appealed to the Northern Ireland Court of Appeal, which also agreed that the case involved direct discrimination based on sexual orientation and that it therefore did not need to consider the McArthurs' beliefs. The McArthurs then appealed the decision of the Northern Ireland Court of Appeal to the UK Supreme Court.

Before we consider the decision of the UK Supreme Court, we will take a moment to compare the legal framework of the *Ashers* case to the *Masterpiece Cakeshop* case recently decided by the U.S. Supreme Court.<sup>3</sup> Both cases involved alleged violations of civil rights legislation. In this type of case, a complaint is made by an individual who claims they have been discriminated against. The cases are civil cases, meaning that there is no criminal penalty such as a prison sentence, but a party found to be in violation can be subject to monetary penalties and fines, as well as being ordered to desist from future violations. However, the source of protection for a party claiming religious right of conscience is different in the United States than in the United Kingdom.

In the United States, freedom of speech and freedom of religion are guaranteed by the First Amendment to the Constitution. The First Amendment is part of the Bill of Rights that was adopted shortly after ratification of the Constitution itself. These rights are incorporated into the foundational legal framework of the nation itself and, therefore, freedom of speech and freedom of religion are considered to be more firmly protected in the United States than anywhere else in the world.

In places such as the United Kingdom, on the oth-

er hand, these rights are protected by legislative action such as adoption of the provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights, as referenced above. The Convention is a pronouncement of certain ideals or rights, which are in turn adopted by the various individual governments. One would therefore anticipate that freedom of religion and freedom of speech would be more jealously guarded in the United States. A comparison of the *Ashers* ruling to the *Masterpiece Cakeshop* ruling reveals that this is not necessarily so.

The bakers in both cases claimed protection under both freedom of speech and freedom of religion. As we saw when we reviewed the *Masterpiece Cakeshop* ruling, instead of making a determination based on these rights, the U.S. Supreme Court focused on the actions of the state civil rights commission, which were deemed hostile towards the baker's religion. While rightly denouncing hostility towards religious beliefs, the ruling left open the question of what the outcome would be if those prosecuting an alleged civil rights violation did not openly show hostility. In other words, the U.S. Supreme Court did not answer the question of whether the much-vaunted U.S. rights of freedom of religion and freedom of speech would protect someone who, in good conscience, could not provide a service proclaiming a pro-homosexual message.

The UK Supreme Court, on the other hand, engaged in a very thoughtful analysis and came to the conclusion that there was no discrimination based on the sexual orientation of the individual seeking the service, but that the McArthurs' objection was to the message they were asked to create. Mr. Lee had purchased other cakes from them before, and they had not refused him service. Presumably, if a heterosexual had requested the same cake with the "Support Gay Marriage" message, the *Ashers* Bakery would have still refused to create the cake. Therefore, in the reasoning of the court, the only discrimination was to the message, not the person requesting it.

Since there was no direct discrimination, the Court then examined the McArthurs' religious beliefs. The UK Supreme Court had noted the McArthurs' unequivocal religious position from the outset, stating their beliefs as follows:

- (a) the only form of full sexual expression which is consistent with biblical teaching (and therefore acceptable to God) is that between a man and a woman within marriage; and
- (b) the only form of marriage consistent with biblical teaching (and therefore acceptable to God) is that between a man and a woman

<sup>3</sup> *Masterpiece Cakeshop v. Colorado Civil Rights Commission*, 584 U.S. \_\_\_\_ (2018)

The court went on to find that these beliefs motivated the McArthurs and provided the basis for their refusal to create the desired cake. It is interesting to note that the UK Supreme Court was unanimous in its decision, with all five justices finding for the McArthurs.

Looking at the facts of the two cases, it appears that the U.S. Supreme Court could also have distinguished discrimination against the message from discrimination against the individual requesting the message. In the United States, however, the focus is more on the effect of the alleged discrimination, and whether a “class” of people is denied access to goods or services. The U.S. Supreme Court will most likely still need to face the question of whether freedom of speech and freedom of religion do allow someone to exercise the right of conscience and refuse to participate in sending a message or celebrating an event that violates their sincerely held religious beliefs. The recent changes in personnel on the U.S. Supreme Court might make it more plausible that a decision would come down similarly to the *Ashers* ruling in the United Kingdom. In the United Kingdom, given the nature of the protection of freedom of religion and freedom of expression, a change could be legislated that swings the pendulum against these rights. We have

the assurance that whatever legal changes occur, all history unfolds in accordance with our heavenly Father’s will.

When we deal as Christians with cases such as these we must always be careful to make sure that the case is framed in such a way that the true issue is revealed. The world wants to frame the issue as Christians discriminating against homosexuals or other who walk in sin because of some irrational hatred of the individuals themselves; but the true issue is not a bias or hatred by Christians against other people. The true issue is that Christians condemn sins such as homosexuality, refuse to support or condone those sins, and desire that those who walk in such sins repent. The world hates Christians for their disapproval of those sins and demands acceptance instead. When we speak of these issues or when we are charged with violations of civil rights, it is important to make it clear that we are merely standing on our beliefs as taught in Scripture, and that any form of legal prosecution is actually persecution for those beliefs. It is important that we leave no doubt as to our actual beliefs, and the biblical basis for those beliefs. When we do so, the world is exposed in its hatred for God’s truth and for Christ Himself.



## Bring the books...

**Mr. Charles Terpstra, member of Faith Protestant Reformed Church in Jenison, Michigan and full-time librarian/registrar/archivist at the Protestant Reformed Seminary**

*A Survey of Church History*, Part 4, W. Robert Godfrey, and *The English Reformation and the Puritans*, Michael Reeves. Sanford, FL: Ligonier Ministries, 2014, DVD format \$43.20; CD \$27.90; download \$19.20. [Reviewed by Douglas J. Kuiper.]

Are you interested in learning about church history, but not interested in reading? Or looking for something educational to listen to/watch in the car on a long trip? Then check out the “Teaching Series” of Ligonier Ministries ([www.ligonier.org](http://www.ligonier.org)). Every set in the series comes as a DVD (video), a CD (audio), or a download to your device (video), and consists of 12 lectures of 23 minutes each. The short duration of the lectures means you can cover one quickly. As regards format, the

download is the most economical, and if you download to a tablet, you can watch it anywhere. But, although all the series I have so far are in DVD or download formats, I do not need to be watching a speaker and seeing others in the audience; I am as happy with a CD to which I can listen while driving or doing other lighter activities.

The two series under review complement each other. Godfrey has taught four series covering the history of the New Testament Church, and a fifth series is promised. The fourth series treats the years from 1600-1800. Godfrey covers some of the doctrinal developments and challenges of the continental Reformed church in those years, spends four lectures on the Puritans in England and one more on the Puritans in New England, then

treats the Enlightenment, John Wesley and George Whitefield, The Great Awakening, Jonathan Edwards, and the American Revolution.

Whereas Godfrey crosses over into the New World, Michael Reeves confines himself to the history of the English Reformation from the time of Tyndale through the 1600s. The English Reformation, one might remember, was not so much doctrinal as political, and the pendulum kept swinging from Catholicism to Protestantism, until it finally stopped swinging when Anglicanism prevailed by the end of the 1600s. In five lectures, Reeves does justice to the political intrigue of the reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary I, Elizabeth, James I, Charles I, and Charles II. With this historical background he teaches us about the theology of the Puritans, as well as focusing on three specific men—Richard Sibbes, Thomas Goodwin, and John Owen. Throughout, he defends the term “Puritan” and the men called “Puritans” from the current negative connotations. “Puritan” means first that they

sought to keep the Church of England pure, and second that they sought to live godly lives.

Both men present their material ably. Reeves’ drew me in with his soft-spoken voice, British accent, and colorful analogies. On the other hand, Godfrey’s digressive commentaries, by which he demonstrated that past history is being repeated today, were also interesting. I appreciated his analysis of the difference between the American Revolution of 1776 and the French Revolution a decade later, as well as his advice in concluding his lecture on Jonathan Edwards: if you must choose between reading Edwards and John Calvin, read Calvin—he is easier to read, more balanced as a theologian, and more reliable as a pastor. Any guilt I have felt for reading very little of Edwards, I feel no longer.

Again, I recommend these videos, as well as others in the series, to those who wish to learn about church history without reading.

Yet, I still prefer a book.



## News from our churches

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

### Trivia question

At which of our churches is a Pinewood Derby car race held each year as an activity of fellowship and fundraising? Answer later in this column.

### School activities

The junior-high band and choir students from the Hull Protestant Reformed Christian School and the Northwest Iowa Protestant Reformed School held their annual combined program on Monday, November 19, at 7:00 P.M. at Calvary Protestant Reformed Church. Refreshments and a time of fellowship followed the program.

Heritage Christian School Foundation sponsored an “Evening of Praise” at Grandville High School’s auditorium on Saturday, November 24. Sponsorship and general admission tickets included a dessert reception following the concert. All were invited to join as God was praised through the gift of music—a wide variety of vocal and instrumental music, we might add.

Advance Notice—Federation Summer 2019 Seminar: The Federation of PR School Societies is planning a Summer Seminar on June 20, 2019 at Faith PRC. The title of the topic for the seminar is: “When Your Student is Hurting: Biblical and Reformed Counseling.” The Federation especially encourages all teachers to attend and benefit from this important and timely seminar, but school-board members, parents, and anyone interested in this theme are welcome to attend. There is no cost to attend but you are asked to register at [www.prcs.org](http://www.prcs.org) and click on the Summer Seminar tab. Please keep your eyes and ears open for more information.

### Young people’s activities

The Calvary PRC Young People’s Society in Hull, IA invited members of the five Siouxland area churches to join them for their annual Thanksgiving Singspiration on a Sunday evening in November. A collection was received to offset costs of attending the 2019 YP’s Convention. Singing praise to God is always a great

way to end a Sabbath day! The annual Christmas Singspiration of the tri-state area was held in Edgerton, MN on December 23.

The Young People's Society of Immanuel PRC of Lacombe, Alberta invited the congregation to their annual Soup Supper and Pie Auction on Friday, November 30, at Genesis School. Supper began at 6:30 p.m. with a pie auction following. Anyone could donate a pie for the auction. A great activity on a cool evening! Sample all the delicious soups and purchase a pie for dessert! There are not many pies that I don't like.

### Senior activities

Senior Retreat: Save the dates September 17-20, 2019 for the Senior Retreat at Gull Lake Ministries in southwest MI. The retreat is sponsored by Faith and Zion PRCs.

### Minister activities

Grandville PRC's Council formed another trio from which the congregation would call one to serve as minister-on-loan to Covenant Evangelical Reformed Church in Singapore: Pastors G. Eriks (Hudsonville, MI), E. Guichelaar (Randolph, WI), and S. Key (Loveland, CO). On November 25, Grandville called Rev. Steven Key to serve as minister-on-loan to the CERC.

On November 18 Rev. Joshua Engelsma (Doon, IA) announced that God had led him to decline the call extended to him from Immanuel PRC in Lacombe, and Rev. Brian Huizinga (Redlands, CA) announced God's will that he decline the call from Trinity PRC in Hudsonville, MI. We trust the King of the Church has the best in mind for all involved. May they be at peace with these decisions.

Immanuel subsequently announced a trio of Revs. W. Langerak, J. Laning, and M. VanderWal. On December 2 Rev. Langerak (Southeast PRC) received that call.

Trinity PRC's Council formed a new trio consisting of Rev. J. Engelsma, Rev. G. Eriks, and Rev. W Langerak. On December 9 the congregation voted to call Rev. Eriks (Hudsonville PRC).

### Mission activities

From the bulletin of the Maranatha PRC in Valenzuela City, the Philippines:

In commemoration of the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Synod of Dordt, a conference will be hosted by the consistory and congregation of Provident Christian Church (Reformed) on Friday, December 28, beginning at 9:00 A.M. until about 4:00 P.M. in their church building in Provident Village, Marikina. Rev. Holstege plans to

speak on Dordt and the doctrine of grace, Rev. Ibe plans to speak on Dordt and the preaching of the gospel, and Rev. Smit plans to speak on Dordt and its concern for faithful Sabbath keeping. For the fourth segment of the conference the three speakers will also participate in an open forum Q/A session. The conference will include a morning merienda, an afternoon merienda, and a lunch meal. The "Reformed Book Shelf" will also be selling RFPA books at the conference. Rev. D. Kleyn plans to serve as moderator. The registration fee for the conference was set at P50 per person. If there are any questions about the conference or the books to be sold at the conference, then please contact our conference moderator, Rev. D. Kleyn. Please plan to attend, and bring a friend.

### Sister-church activities

From the bulletin of the Covenant ERC in Singapore:

Evangelism Committee will be organizing the Christmas Gospel meeting on December 25. The committee has chosen the title of the Gospel meeting as "The Wise Man Gospel" based on Mathew 2:1-12, which speaks of the wise men from the east seeking to worship the newborn king in Jerusalem. Prof. Cammenga has willingly agreed to speak in this gospel meeting.

As the world celebrates the season of Christmas eating and drinking in darkness, let all us take this opportunity to be a light unto our non-Christian relatives, friends, and colleagues by sharing with them the true meaning of the incarnation and birth of Jesus Christ. As we desire our loved ones to be called out of darkness into the marvelous light of Jesus Christ, pray that the Lord will kindle in our hearts a zeal and boldness to invite our non-Christian relatives, friends, and colleagues to this gospel meeting; for faith cometh by the hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.

### Trivia answer

The 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Pinewood Derby Event is scheduled to be held in Heritage PRC of Sioux Falls, SD on February 23. All are invited to compete, watch, have lunch, and fellowship. A free-will donation will be taken to defray costs and support the Association for Protestant Reformed Education there. More trivia next time.

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

## Announcements

### Teacher needed

The **Edmonton Protestant Reformed Christian School** is in need of a full-time teacher for the 2019–2020 school year. The school will be starting with grades 1–4, and the board is willing to work with the teacher on a curriculum suited to their preference. Please contact Gord Tolsma at [gr.tolsma@gmail.com](mailto:gr.tolsma@gmail.com) / 780-777-5780 or Scott Ferguson at [s\\_r\\_ferguson@hotmail.com](mailto:s_r_ferguson@hotmail.com).

### Teacher needed

**Heritage Christian High School** in Dyer, Indiana is accepting applications for an open position for the 2019-20 school year. As our enrollment grows, we seek to add a full-time teacher to our faculty. Our areas of greatest potential for interested teachers are in the Social Studies, Business and Technology, and Mathematics Departments; there is flexibility in hiring. Qualified, Protestant Reformed applicants may inquire with our administrator, Ralph Medema, at (219) 558-2660, or email [ralph.medema@heritagechs.org](mailto:ralph.medema@heritagechs.org).

### Teacher needed

**Faith Christian School of Randolph, WI** is seeking one full-time teacher for a high school position in 2018-2019. There is the possibility of teaching some 7th & 8th grade classes depending on the applicant's abilities and preferences. All interested individuals should contact Jack Regnerus ([jackbuiltregs@gmail.com](mailto:jackbuiltregs@gmail.com) or 920-296-3529) or Mike Vander Veen ([mvanderveen@randolphfcs.org](mailto:mvanderveen@randolphfcs.org) or 920-296-4406) for more information or to apply.

## Reformed Witness Hour

### Rev. Wilbur Bruinsma

- Jan. 6 "The Lord Revealed From Heaven"  
II Thessalonians 1:7-10
- Jan. 13 "You Cannot Serve Jehovah"  
Joshua 24:19-22
- Jan. 20 "Ehud: Deliverer of the Covenant"  
Judges 3:12-30
- Jan. 27 "Learning Contentment"  
Philippians 4:11

### Classis West

Classis West of the Protestant Reformed Churches will meet in Heritage PRC on Wednesday, March 6, 2019, at 8:30 A.M. the Lord willing. All material for the Agenda is to be in the hands of the Stated Clerk by February 4 (30 days before classis convenes). All delegates in need of lodging or transportation from the airport should notify the clerk of Heritage's consistory.  
Rev. J. Engelsma, Stated Clerk