

The Standard Bearer

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Jehovah's Covenant Faithfulness

Nevertheless my lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail.

My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips.

Psalm 89:33, 34

God is a faithful God, as evidenced in that this issue of the *Standard Bearer* is the beginning of Volume 88. This is also the time of the year when our schools begin their new season of covenant education. We are surrounded by evidences of God's faithfulness.

The form for the administration of baptism states that baptism is a seal of the covenant and of the righteousness of faith. Infants are to be baptized as heirs of the kingdom of God and of His covenant. It grounds these truths in God's Word, as seen in Genesis 17:7 and Acts 2:39.

The faithfulness of God with respect to His covenant is the subject of this particular Psalm. God cares for His church because He is faithful to His covenant. Thus the versification of this Psalm in Psalter #243 is entitled "Covenant Faithfulness." The idea of this Psalm

is to extol Jehovah's covenant faithfulness. No less than seven times Jehovah's faithfulness is mentioned. Five of the seven times the psalmist speaks of Jehovah's faithfulness. Two of the seven times it is Jehovah Himself speaking of His faithfulness.

It must be pointed out that whoever is speaking of this faithfulness, the words are directed, first of all, to David, Jehovah's servant, and to his generations. But in the final sense, the object of this faithfulness is Christ, and those who are Christ's. David is the type that points to Christ as the one whom the psalmist has in mind. The Psalm speaks of the faithfulness of Jehovah to Christ and His people, and, throughout, this faithfulness of Jehovah is related to His covenant as He purposes to realize it with His people in and through Christ Jesus. "I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant, Thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations" (vv. 3, 4). And in verses 28 and 29 we read, "My mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with Him. His seed also will I make to endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven." The same is true in verse 34. Thus, in the entire Psalm, we hear the Word of God—Jehovah speaking to us of His covenant faithfulness.

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The idea of the covenant, as we well know, is that God's covenant is the eternal friendship relation that the triune God enjoys within the Being of God Himself, in which all the Persons in the Godhead seek and find each other in love. Thus they have most intimate communion and fellowship with each other.

In the eternal counsel of God, the triune God declares it to be His will and good pleasure that the Son of God shall become the Christ, the Redeemer of a people chosen of God in sovereign election, the Redeemer who shall deliver that people through the way of sin and grace and bring them also into His own covenant life and fellowship.

The Son of God, having been sent by the Father, the triune God, appears in time in a world that is steeped in sin and death. He assumes the human nature, being conceived and born through the miracle of the incarnation in the virgin Mary, who was in the elect generation and royal line of David. It is with Him, that is, with Christ, that Jehovah establishes His covenant. And, through Christ, that covenant embraces all whom the Father gave to Christ in the eternal counsel of election. Thus, when we speak of Jehovah's covenant faithfulness to us, we understand that this is possible only in and through Christ Jesus, our Mediator and Savior.

Christ, therefore, as Head and Mediator of God's covenant, is the one with whom the faithful Jehovah makes His covenant. Though the children that the Father has given unto Him break the covenant, which they do when they forsake God's law and walk not in His judgments, God on His part will not break the covenant He has made with Christ, and through Christ with His people. That is the idea of the text. This implies that Christ also shall not fail. God's mercy, which is that will of God to deliver His people from the greatest possible woe unto the highest possible bliss, shall never be taken away from Christ, their Mediator and Savior. God's faithfulness, which is that attribute of God according to which He keeps the Word that He has spoken, shall never fail Him. The Word that Jehovah had spoken in eternity to Christ concerning His covenant, Jehovah will not violate. He will not alter the Word that has passed over His lips. It shall stand forever.

What a great comfort these words were to Christ

during His earthly ministry. When He was required to take upon Himself our sins and the curse that was due to us for them, and to walk the way of the cross where He was to pass under the vials of God's holy wrath as a sacrifice of atonement for all our sins—how the words of our text must have strengthened Him. When He was required to suffer the very torments of hell in our stead, so that it appeared to Him that His God had forsaken Him and He was pressed to cry out: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"—there can be no doubt that He found refuge in the words of Psalm 89:33 and 34. And when Jehovah raised His Son from the dead and exalted Him to His right hand, where all power was given unto Him in heaven and on earth to apply unto His people the fruits of His redemptive work, the words of that text still spoke to Him.

The words of Psalm 89 spoken to Christ were incorporated into the Scriptures in order that they might also speak to us of God's covenant faithfulness. Now we know how and why He could prove His faithfulness to usward. When He was faithful to Christ, He was also faithful to us, His people, because we were in Christ. That we have received all the blessings of salvation through which we have been taken up into God's covenant life is due to the fact that Jehovah never failed to prove His faithfulness to Christ. He never broke the covenant that He had made with Christ. He never altered the thing that had gone out of His lips. The psalmist had abundant reason to sing of the mercies of Jehovah, to open his mouth to make known Jehovah's faithfulness to all generations.

By the same Spirit that moved the psalmist we are moved to declare boldly now: O Jehovah, how great is thy faithfulness, which Thou hast so graciously shown unto us. Thus, you can understand that we do not wish to glory in man, in our own accomplishments. We have nothing of ourselves wherein to boast. All our boasting is in Jehovah, our covenant God. He it is who has so wonderfully revealed Himself to us as the God of our salvation in Christ. His covenant, into which we believe that He has incorporated us, He has faithfully realized with us and our seed. That covenant we have learned to see in the many babies that are born into the church.

Presently, we believe, we shall see how faithfully our God has kept His Word, when we shall see the vast

multitude, gathered out of every nation, tribe, and tongue and clothed in the clean white garments of salvation, who with us shall abide with our covenant God in His tabernacle forever. Then we expect to hear Him speak once more, as He spoke to Christ in Psalm 89, "Nevertheless my lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. My

covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips."

He will add, My Son, and your Savior, has brought unto Me all My dear children. Not one of them is missing. Come, ye blessed, enter into the joy of thy Lord, and share with Me My own covenant life, world without end. 

EDITORIALLY SPEAKING

PROF. RUSSELL DYKSTRA

With this issue, by the grace of God, the *Standard Bearer* begins a new volume, eighty-eight years after it was launched. As they do every summer, the *SB* writers set the course for the new year by adopting a schedule of writers and rubrics. It is my privilege to pull out the telescope and give you a peek at the course they have determined to follow, D.V.

I can tell you immediately, that the direction and goals of the *SB* are the same as they have been for its entire existence. The flag of the ship flies on the front page of every issue—A Reformed Magazine. The staff is unswerving in its determination to explore (expound) and defend the heritage that God has given. This is why each of the writers choose to be aboard, that is, writing for the *SB*.

Yet, in a progressive enterprise, changes will, of necessity, be made either in the personnel or in some of the writing. The good news is that we are leaving none of the writers behind, but are adding quality writers. More good news – three significant rubrics are planned for the new volume.

First of all, a shift in duties is planned for Rev. Andy Lanning—from *In His Fear* to a new area—*News From the Contact Committee*. The "Contact Committee" is officially the synodically appointed "Committee for Contact with Other Churches." This new rubric matches well Rev. Lanning's duties as corresponding secretary for the CC. From this vantage point, he will be well stationed to provide news and information about the churches with whom the Protestant Reformed Churches have contact.

We note too that Rev. Daniel Kleyn transfers from *In His Fear* to more writing in *Go Ye Into All the World*, for which he is well qualified as one of the PRC missionaries in the Philippines. However, that means the end, at least for now, of the rubric *In His Fear*.

We gratefully report that Rev. Steven Key rejoins the staff after a time off to settle in to the life and work of a new congregation (Loveland PRC). He comes with the desire to write in a new area, namely, *Reformed Worldview*. The staff wholeheartedly agreed with his assessment that development in this area would serve the readers well.

The staff also welcomes a new writer to the ranks, Rev. Cory Griess. Rev. Griess preached a series of sermons in his congregation (Calvary PRC, Hull, IA) on worship and determined to rewrite them for the benefit of the *SB* readers. We are delighted that he did and welcome him aboard.

So, welcome, new writers and all the current ones. We pray God's richest blessing on all the men who spend themselves to write for the *SB*. We thank God for each and every one. May God give us the wisdom, the boldness, and the perseverance to be faithful laborers with a ready pen.

We are grateful too for others, without whose labors, the *SB* would not go out month after month. The Reformed Free Publishing Association, formed at the beginning to give Revs. Hoeksema, Danhof, and Ophoff the opportunity to write, continues in the sons and grandsons to raise good and solid support for the *SB*, as is evidenced by the continued low subscription rate. And Don and Judi Doezema—making the *SB* so much better than it would ever be if it depended on the editors and writers—their work is invaluable.

And to the readers, we wish you God's blessing in the reading of the *SB* for another year. We hope you catch every issue, including the upcoming Reformation issue on the Belgic Confession and another special issue yet to be announced. We covet your payers that the *SB* will stay the course, and be an instrument to set forth and defend God's truth for the good of His church and the glory of His name. —RJD 

Harold Camping, Yet Again

“For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ and shall deceive many. ...but the end is not yet.... Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets...inso-much that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

Matthew 24:5, 23, 24

What are we going to say about this fellow?

It was not enough that he misled thousands back in 1994.

It was not enough that he by his foolish calculations and unfulfilled prediction of Christ’s return 17 years ago served only to hold up to gleeful ridicule and open mockery Christ’s church and even Christ’s own words about His sure return.

No, he had to do it again.

This time, May 2011. May 21 to be exact.

And then, mind you, when this second ‘prophesy’ based on recalculated data did not materialize, did he humble himself in utter embarrassment, repent of his folly, confess he was guilty of grave error, and beg forgiveness of the Lord and of His church?

No, he simply stated he was surprised, a bit bewildered even, and then proceeded to offer an alternate ‘revelation’ that something had happened in the spiritual realm instead, declaring that five months hence

(Oct. 21) the return of Christ and the judgments of God would come to pass just as he, Harold Camping, had foretold all along.

And so this self-anointed Bible teacher, in his folly and egotistical persistence, gives the ungodly scoffers yet another opportunity to hoot and howl, as well as to justify their complete disdain for this ‘preposterous’ Christian preoccupation with the end of the world and God’s judgments upon sin.

On his on-line Family Radio site, Camping, without apology, offers an explanation for his May 21 prophetic fiasco. He assures his ‘faithful’ that he was not really mistaken after all. It was simply that he had failed to realize that in Scripture earthquakes often refer to men (who are made out of the dust of the EARTH) quaking in fear at the thought of God’s judgments (which this mad prophet insists did in fact occur on May 21—scoffers not shaking with laughter as the May 22 newscasts seemed to show, but really quaking with fear).

Camping insists that a rapture did in fact occur on May 21, only this first rapture was not a *bodily* one, as he had mistakenly thought, but a rapture of “the program of salvation.” The gospel hope and promise was raptured up to heaven. As a result, the opportunity for unrepentant sinners to come to salvation ended as

of May 21. On May 21, 2011 their doom was set.

The following quote, lifted from Camping’s online explanation of *What Really Happened [on May 21]* (posted following the non-event), gives an indication of just how set this foolish fellow is in his obstinacy, as set as Balaam of old going to his doom no matter what indication God gave him that an angel with a drawn sword was standing in his way.

Thus we have learned that except for a somewhat different understanding of the words “earthquake” and “rapture” or “catching up” no other past teachings of Judgment Day or the end of the world have been changed [!]. The time line, the certainty of it, the proofs, and the signs are all precisely the same. No other past teachings have been changed or modified. Indeed, on May 21 Christ did come spiritually to put all of the unsaved throughout the world into judgment. But that universal judgment will not be physically seen until the last day of the five month judgment period, on October 21, 2011.

So blind is this mad-prophet. Balaam had nothing on him.

With restraint we refrain from making references of comparison between such a willful blindness and Balaam’s steed of choice.

We must admit that the question can be legitimately raised whether any more ink ought to be spilled on this fellow or time wasted on his discredited predictions. For a man so set on folly, he has received far more attention than he rightly deserves. His name, with his predictions, is achieving cult status out of all proportion to his real importance.

Why add more to what has already been written?

Our justification is twofold; first, the *SB* has not to this point written anything on Camping's most recent prognostications, and, whether we like it or not, his predictions about Christ's return in judgment (posted on billboards from coast to coast and from Manila to London) have become the leading religious news item of the year. And, second, the grievous fact is that Harold Camping has done Christ's waiting, hoping, gospel-preaching church a great disservice in this late hour on history's timeline.

The world's news media (anti-Christian by reflex) is well aware of this.

There is reason why the news media is only too willing to keep pasting Camping's absurdities onto its headlines as long as he keeps uttering them, why it is willing to make space for his predictions in its news telecasts. And it does not have to do with the media's fascination with what makes this aging, slow-talking radio personality tick. He has had his 15 minutes of fame. Ordinarily the public would have long ago wearied of this discredited religious personality. But not in this

instance. The news networks are glad to look him up and hear from him again.

Why?

The reason does not have to do with the personality involved (as dry and withered as last month's news). It has to do with the biblical realities his pronouncements deal with, namely Christ's second coming, the judgments of God, and the end of the world. In other words, the reason has to do with those very matters our twenty-first century society is well aware of and wants to discredit at all costs and in every possible way, that which our society itself refers to as the Apocalypse (as per the Book of the *Revelation*), which even our unbelieving society knows speaks of the final, fiery judgments of God on ungodly mankind for its sins.

This our increasingly anti-Christian society wants to discredit at all cost. They want to assure themselves that for "...all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed..." (Jude 15) they have absolutely nothing to fear. The warnings of God that have of late rumbled through creation and galloped through society can safely be ignored. It's all bogus and a false alarm.

Of such they want to convince themselves.

Harold Camping has handed them such a justification on a silver platter.

And so, as Camping and his latest prophecies come to nothing again and society has yet another opportunity to hoot and howl, we take note in the *SB* and offer our assessment along with all the others.

In this article all we point out is that Camping's latest failed prophecy about the end of the world is timely—timely not for Christ's church, not for those committed to rightly dividing God's Word, not for those called to warn a society increasingly committed to lawlessness about the judgments already sounding and worse ones yet to come, but timely for the anti-Christian forces within our society, timely for the despisers of God and of His Word, timely for those looking for reasons to justify their disdain for all things biblical and Christian.

There is, we are convinced, reason why this time around the news media has paid so much more attention to Camping's prediction about Christ's return and the end of the world than back in 1994. Back then a few religious periodicals took note and foretold Camping's certain failure (the *SB* among them—*SB* vol. 70, Jan. 1, 1993). The world's press took scant notice. Seventeen years ago the news media did not judge this insignificant radio personality worth being associated with real news.

This time it's been notably different. Extensive coverage has been granted.

No doubt part of the explanation is the greater promotion Camping's followers gave to their leader's predictions this time around. Camping's loyal legions demanded attention, purchasing numerous billboards worldwide and standing on street corners proclaiming the precise date of judgment to fall.

The news media has responded.

But we are convinced there is

more behind this extensive attention given to Camping's present predictions than explaining it as a response to the greater hype his followers gave them this time around. We are convinced that the recent attention-demanding catastrophic events and upheavals that have occurred worldwide have something to do with it.

Recent events have set the nations on edge. Recent events have raised the specter that perhaps there is more to this biblical witness concerning prophesied catastrophes as judgments of God portending the final Apocalypse than the skeptics have been willing to acknowledge or have cared to think about.

When a magazine of the status of *Newsweek* has as its cover story *Apocalypse Now?* (March 28-April 4, 2011) with the sub-heading *Tsunamis. Earthquakes. Nuclear Meltdowns. Revolutions. Economies on the Brink. What the #@%! Is Next?*, you know that God Himself has caught the skeptics' attention and put a little worry in their souls, a gnawing uncertainty.

Even the insertion of the characters #@%! is noteworthy. The very curse word obscured indicates an awareness of the very God they are trying to deny.

What has occurred over the face of this globe and in the nations in the last year has been no ordinary turn of events. Upheaval and uncertainty characterizes every segment of this world at present—natural, national, and financial. Earthquakes the size of 9.0+ are not a common thing. But now

a number of them within the last few years! The resulting tsunamis of death and the threat of nuclear disaster are not easily dismissed.

And in the Near East, social upheaval across the board.

Overpowering events have forced worldly society to consider the validity of the biblical witness about the end times and its warnings that as wickedness increases so will the severity of the judgments of God.

The End draws nigh.

And at such a time Harold Camping steps forward to make his absurd, egotistical, and Bible-contradicting predictions.

And we wonder why our society, so on edge, has made so much of this mad prophet and has called his predictions to everyone's attention (in particular Christians who might yet be inclined to talk about biblical judgments as signs of Christ's return), and why the worldlings cannot get enough of hearing from this fellow yet again?

They find Camping's baseless prophecies reassuring. They once again have reason to dismiss all this talk about God's judgments being visited on 'unrepentant mankind' as so much nonsense. They are reaffirmed in their bold mockery of everything holy. "We have nothing to fear."

And for the foreseeable future every time a preacher of righteousness identifies great natural catastrophes with God's judgments and the nearness of Christ's return, mockery and scoffing will be expressed—"Ah-h yes, another one of those 'Harold Camping fellows.' When will you crackpots ever learn?"

Such service this Harold Camp-

ing and his great biblical knowledge have rendered the truth and Christ's church.

The damage he has done and persists in doing is no little evil.

Sad to say, what has been stated above is not the only or even the greatest evil Camping has done to Christ's cause in his unordained 'ministry,' and so more must be written.

Because the next *SB* issue, October 15, is a special Reformation issue to be devoted to marking the 450th anniversary of the Belgic Confession, we will wait until the November 1 issue to make a few more comments on Camping, his predictions, and other evils of which he is guilty.

And yes, a November 1 issue of the *SB* will be published.

We can state with absolute certainty that Camping's predictions concerning God's final judgment and Christ's return will no more happen on October 21 than they did on May 21 or back in 1994. The simple fact is, Christ is not going to return next month, next year, nor the year following, 2013. Such predictions do not make us guilty of Camping presumptuousness. Such is a fact that *is* in accordance with what *is* revealed in Scripture.

On this and other matters we will comment in the November 1 editorial, D.V.

D.V., because when it comes to one's own life, one knows not what tomorrow, let alone next month or year, may bring. But when it comes to our Lord's return, certain things *must* take place. Until they do, "...the end is not yet" (Matt. 24: 6).



Revelation (4)

Forbidden to Add to or Subtract from God's Word

Already in the Garden of Eden, the devil was at work attacking the word that God had revealed. The Creator had said that there was one specific tree of which Adam was not to eat. The devil, being aware of this, went after the woman, and suggested to her that God had said something that really He had not: "Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" (Gen. 3:1b).

The woman first corrected the serpent, but then she herself altered what God had said: "We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die" (Gen. 3:2b-3).

God had said nothing about touching the tree. It was only the eating of the tree that He had forbidden. The woman, like the devil, changed the words God had spoken.

This story at the beginning of Genesis serves to indicate that God's revelation is constantly under attack. Sometimes those attacks are very explicit. Other times they are quite subtle. Yet this is an activity in which our three-fold enemy is constantly engaged, and of which we must be very aware.

I will not attempt to list all the different ways in which men have tried to make changes to what God has revealed unto us. Only a few obvious ways, and some of the more subtle ways will be mentioned. The point here is to stress that changing God's revelation

is a grievous sin, and one that is becoming increasingly common in the day in which we live.

Sharp warnings against altering God's revelation

It is quite obvious that altering God's revelation is an extremely serious matter. To say, "Thus saith the Lord," and then to utter something that God has never said, is to be guilty of prophesying falsely. As one would expect, many are the passages that condemn this as a great evil, and that speak of the severe judgment that comes upon all who impenitently do this.

Then there are also passages that speak against the evil of taking what God has said and making additions to it or subtractions from it. Warnings against this are found in the Old Testament: "What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it" (Deut. 12:32). "Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar" (Prov. 30:5-6).

In the New Testament, at the very end of the Bible, we find an extremely sharp warning about the judgment that will certainly come upon all who foolishly endeavour to change what God has revealed:

For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book (Rev. 22:18-19).

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Previous article in this series: September 1, 2011, p. 467.

These repeated and sharp warnings serve to point out not only that this sin is extremely serious, but also that it is very prevalent. It is committed in various ways by those all around us. It is a sin against which we, too, must constantly be on our guard.

Many ways of subtracting from God's Word

Many are the ways that man has come up with to subtract from the Word of God. Some of these are very obvious and direct attacks.

There are, of course, many who deny that there is such a thing as divine revelation. Multitudes refer to the Bible as simply another piece of human literature. They explicitly reject the idea that this book is a record of what the one true God has revealed.

There are others who will say that the word of God is *in* the Bible, but that it has to be *found*. Such Bible critics argue that much of the Scriptures consists of the word of men, who sometimes wrote their own private views on matters, and even contradicted at times the views of some of the other writers. By this line of argumentation, these false teachers seek to take away from God's people large portions of the Bible, labeling them as merely the fallible words of sinful men.

Such people commonly deny that the events recorded in the first portion of Genesis actually happened. Some might say that the writer of Genesis simply put down a view concerning origins that was common in his day. But however they want to explain it, if they deny that these events actually happened, then they are saying that the passages that speak of these events are not actually the word of God.

God never lies, and He never makes mistakes. So if these passages speak of events that never happened, the story must have originated not from God, but from the mind of man. Thus it should be evident that one who persists in holding such a position is guilty of the grievous sin of subtracting from the Word of God.

One more common example of subtracting from God's revelation is the evil of taking a command given to the New Testament church and claiming that it was a requirement only for the culture in the days of the apostles. Take, for example, this clear command of our Lord: "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But

I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence" (I Tim. 2:11–12).

This injunction concerning the conduct of women in the church institute is directly opposed to the thoughts of our present-day world. Therefore, those who desire to make the Bible conform to the thoughts of this age have come up with a way to get rid of this statement. "This commandment," they say, "was merely for the culture of the day in which Paul lived. We in our culture have matured considerably since that time, and therefore this commandment no longer is needed for us." Arguments such as this are very common today, and are being used effectively to strike this statement, and others like it, from the Scriptures.

Those who subtract from Scripture in this way on the issue of women in church office are very likely to commit the same sin when it comes to other issues as well. The sin committed by these people is deeper than that of violating a certain commandment concerning church government (as serious as that may be). It is the sin of subtracting from God's revelation. It is centrally their attitude toward Scripture—and thus toward God Himself—that needs to be addressed. The stern warnings of Scripture against altering God's revelation must be brought to such people.

The Scriptures are sufficient: No addition is needed

Those who add to God's revelation are essentially denying that the Scriptures are sufficient. Our fathers recognized this, and quoted Scripture passages that warn against adding to or subtracting from the Word of God as proof of the sufficiency of Scripture:

We believe that those Holy Scriptures fully contain the will of God, and that whatsoever man ought to believe unto salvation is sufficiently taught therein.... For, since it is forbidden to add unto or take away any thing from the Word of God, it doth thereby evidently appear that the doctrine thereof is most perfect and complete in all respects (Belgic Confession, Article 7).

By trying to add to God's Word one is essentially saying that there is something lacking in what God has made known to us. Such people are clearly denying that the Scriptures God has given us are sufficient.

The Romish church, of course, does this blatantly when she claims that the “infallible” word of God that comes from the mouth of the pope has to be added to what we have in Scripture. Undoubtedly it was against this evil that our fathers were battling when they officially adopted the Belgic Confession.

There are other obvious ways in which people fall into this evil today. Take, for example, all those who claim that God right now is still bringing new revelations, sometimes by means of speaking in tongues. A number of “televangelists” have come right out and claimed that God has spoken to them, making known something that they, supposedly, are called to proclaim to others. Such individuals clearly manifest themselves to be false prophets.

Yet there are other, more subtle ways in which even God’s people sometimes fall into this error. Just as Eve added to the word of God, so many today fall into the sin of adding to God’s law. This is a tendency especially of those who have a rather external view of what it means to be holy. Yet it is a sin into which any of us can

fall, and against which we all must be constantly on our guard.

Today there is another, rather underhanded way to add to God’s revelation—a way that is becoming more common and is sometimes undetected. I refer now to the error of teaching that there are good works that God requires of us, that we are supposed to become aware of, not from the word of God in the Scriptures, but rather from the word of God made known in the creation.

It is true, of course, that God makes Himself known by means of the creation. But He does not tell us in the creation necessary things that we are unable to discover from the Scriptures. Such a teaching really denies that the Scriptures themselves are sufficient.

This, however, is a rather large subject, and one that in our own day needs to be looked at in much more detail. This will also then serve to bring us to our next subject—the word of God made known in the creation itself. Lord willing, we will turn to that subject next time. 

A Significant Anniversary (1)

A significant anniversary is upon us. On October 3, 2011, the Declaration of Principles of the Protestant Reformed Churches (Declaration) will be sixty years old. As is typical at anniversaries, we will reminisce about the life of this important friend of the Protestant Reformed Churches (PRC). It is fitting as well that this reminiscence be done in the *Standard Bearer* (SB). The SB and the Declaration have always been close friends. When its friend was attacked, the SB faithfully defended her. When its friend triumphed, the SB rejoiced with her. And now on her sixtieth anniversary it is fitting that the SB celebrate her.

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In the opening editorial of the twenty-sixth volume of the SB, Rev. Herman Hoeksema wrote a line full of foreboding: “The future does not look bright to me” (26.1:6). The year was 1949. The clouds of controversy had gathered. The controversy over a general promise of God in the covenant to all the baptized was raging in the PRC, and on the pages of the SB in particular. Indeed, in a subsequent editorial—the beginning of a crucial series on the unconditional promise of God in the covenant, “As to Conditions”—Rev. Hoeksema indicated that the controversy had been going on for over a year (26.2:28).

In those ominous words, Rev. Herman Hoeksema was right. Within four years the denomination of the PRC, barely twenty-eight years of age, would be rent by schism—severe, painful, consuming schism. She was

cut in half. And that was only the end result of a long battle that had been carried on in writing, preaching, and at the denominational assemblies.

One wonders quietly while he is perusing this history if the current refusal decisively to condemn the root errors of the Federal Vision is not due in large part to the understanding of the costs this would entail, and the complete unwillingness to pay them. Indeed, Hoeksema himself exposed this issue in the controversy over the Declaration. About those who caused schism in the churches, he asked, “Why did they repudiate and reject it [the Declaration]? My answer is: not as a matter of principle, but because they were not satisfied...that, as churches, we were small. They wanted to become big, and in order to grow outwardly they were willing to compromise and to deny the truth” (34.11:245).

It was not so with the valiant defenders of the truth at that time. They did not hesitate. The truth was at stake. As Augustus Toplady said, and whom the *SB* quoted in the issue that broke the news of the split in PRC, “It is in the church, as it is with nations: war must sometimes be carried on, in order to establish a sound and durable peace at last” (29.21:500).

Prior to the schism of 1953, the war carried on within the PRC revolved around the Declaration. Some, indeed many, blamed the schism on the Declaration adopted by the 1951 Synod of the PRC.

The Declaration over the course of its sixty-year life received its share of harsh criticism. It is there on the pages of the *SB* for all to read. The Declaration’s opponents spared no criticism to discredit it. It was grievously wounded in the house of its supposed friends. Loudly they proclaimed that they had no problem with its content, but want it they did not.

Even prior to the events of 1953, one critic, Rev. B. Kok, wrote about the Declaration, “This action has been, and if God does not graciously forbid, will be the cause of dissension and schism in our churches” (27.7:155).

Hoeksema answered Kok’s charge immediately. “The Declaration is entirely based upon the Three Forms of Unity. It certainly represents the doctrine of the Protestant Reformed Churches. And therefore it can never be the cause of schism.” Schism is caused “by those who within the church agitate against that doctrine

and against that confession [of the Declaration and the Reformed creeds—NJJL] and try to compromise and throw open the doors of that church to doctrines that militate against the confessions of that church” (27.7:152).

Kok’s severe criticism was only a part of the criticism that began publicly in the *SB* with five questions from Rev. J. Blankespoor: “Is it church-politically correct to make such a declaration on the basis of a request of a committee?” “Is this declaration exclusively for those outside of our denomination, or also for our own people?” “Am I correct in drawing this conclusion... [that the declaration is directed mainly at the Liberated Churches—NJJL]?” “Does this [drawing up of the Declaration] imply that our Confessions are ambiguous on these points so that these truths cannot be clearly proven from the Confessions without this declaration of principles?” “Have the Reformed Churches ever set a precedent in making a declaration of the Confessions?” (26.22:516).

The critics would follow that script throughout the controversy over the Declaration and never deviate far from it. Indeed, its critics were fond of saying that they had no problem with the content of the Declaration, but only with how it came into being and its necessity.

That it was criticized at first is understandable. The Declaration came on the ecclesiastical scene in the PRC when the 1950 Synod of the PRC provisionally adopted the Declaration and sent it to all the consistories to direct comments via the classes to the 1951 Synod. In July of 1950, Hoeksema published the full text in the *SB* in both English and Dutch. The purpose was to elicit the response of the people to the Declaration. Rev. Hoeksema wrote in the *SB*, “Of course, anyone is entitled...to criticize the declaration itself” (27.1:4).

And criticize they did. The salvos came fast and furious.

The particular tactics of the critics of the Declaration were exposed almost immediately by a sharp-eyed, theologically astute reader of the *SB*: “He speaks about origin, and intentions, etc, but not one word about the contents.... It’s the truth isn’t it?” (27.1:24).

That was the question!

No one criticized the content. Not one person. Hoeksema waited, he waited patiently. Repeatedly he

called for someone, anyone, to criticize the content of the Declaration. He patiently published the letters of the critics in the *SB*. One he even commended. At last Hoeksema wrote,

The only question concerning this Declaration is whether it is according to the Confessions, or not. If it is not, we do not want it. In as far as it is not let us criticize it and correct it. But the question is pure and simple whether or not this Declaration is an expression of the Confession. But about this only question that is of import no one has written as yet.... A half a year has been wasted, and no one has as yet discussed the contents of this Declaration.... Since, however, no one has thus far discussed the contents of the Declaration of Principles, the *Standard Bearer* proposes to do so (27.6:124–25).

Thus he began his long series explaining the Declaration. He disproved the claim that the Declaration came about in an illegal manner. He blew the doors off the criticism that synods do not have the right to make binding doctrinal statements: “The question of binding or not binding...has been introduced into our churches by the Liberated” (27.6:124). About Klaas Schilder’s book criticizing the Declaration as extra-scriptural binding, Hoeksema wrote, “The author is either very superficially acquainted with our Confessions, or hated to work with them” (28.16:365).

About the charge that the Declaration was unclear, Herman Hoeksema wrote, “Do not forget that it represents years of Protestant Reformed thought, and that the terms are very carefully chosen” (27.10:221).

Having dispatched the superficial criticisms of the Declaration, he set about to prove that most important point, *whether the Declaration was confessional or not*.

Although the Declaration was criticized as church politically illegal; although it was criticized as unnecessary, hasty, and unclear, to which criticism Hoeksema responded on the pages of the *SB*, he spent the vast bulk of his voluminous writing about the Declaration proving that it was confessional.

This was the issue.

Hoeksema himself believed that the most significant action of the Synod of 1951 was not the actual adop-

tion of the Declaration as a form for the organization of prospective Protestant Reformed Churches, a use to which these churches are bound to this day, but rather the motion to declare “that the Declaration...is the expression of the Confessions with regard to some fundamental principles.” “The question whether this Synod will express agreement with the Declaration as an expression of the Confession is paramount. It is to me [Hoeksema] more important than the adoption of the Declaration of Principles as a form for the Mission Committee” (28.5:101).

Having proved that it was confessional and necessary, Hoeksema closed his series defending the Declaration with these powerful words: “If our next synod should dare to reject it, I see no longer any hope for the future of our Protestant Reformed Churches as remaining distinctively Reformed” (27.14:318).

When the Declaration came to the Synod of 1951, it did not reject the document. The minutes of that synod read like a battlefield report, and Hoeksema’s gripping account of the proceedings in volume 28 of the *SB* is a must read. After gaining the heights on the question of its legality, the hill on which the opponents had planted their flag, the synod adopted the Declaration. “It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us, to adopt the Declaration of Principles” was Hoeksema’s conviction after that synod (28.3:52–53).

The adoption of that document was a significant event. Rev. Hoeksema called the synod of 1951 one of the most significant synods in the history of the Protestant Reformed Churches. “The Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches of 1951 definitely closed its sessions on October 3. It belongs, therefore, in the past, and will undoubtedly go down in history as one of the most important synods—if not the most important—that to date was ever held” (28.3:52). Indeed, I doubt if to this day any would contradict that statement. In view of the subsequent history of the PRC and their synods, there were others that were important, others at which important matters were treated, but none rivaled that one for prime significance in the history of the PRC.

After the events of 1953, Hoeksema called the Declaration “one of the most important documents that was ever adopted by our churches” (34.11:244).

The anniversary of the Declaration is significant, therefore, because the document itself is significant to the PRC. It was the conviction of Herman Hoeksema, and with him Rev. Ophoff agreed (27.6:138), that were it not for the action of the 1951 Synod of adopting the Declaration, there would be no distinctively Reformed PRC; they would have been “swallowed up” by Liberated covenant theology (34.11:244). The Declaration sets down the *raison d’être* of the PRC.

If the gospel of the sovereign grace of God, particularly applied to the covenant, is not the gospel proclaimed by the PRC, they lose their right to separate existence. If they will not maintain sovereign, particular grace in the covenant, they will not maintain it

over against the three points either, a point borne out when those who rejected the Declaration did not join the Liberated churches, but returned to the Christian Reformed Church (CRC).

Indeed, I would argue that the Declaration *is* the *raison d’être* of the PRC. That this was also the conviction of Herman Hoeksema is clear from his repeated statements that if the PRC would not adopt the Declaration, they should return to the CRC on their knees.

On the day of its adoption, the Declaration became the settled and binding decision of the PRC, in the words of Hoeksema, on “one aspect of ‘common grace’” (28.5:53).

On that, next time.... 

SPECIAL ARTICLE

REV. DOUGLAS KUIPER

“Grieve Not the Spirit”: Sins Against the Holy Spirit (2)

Blasphemy Against the Holy Spirit

In our last article we noted that the Scriptures refer to and warn against various sins against the Holy Spirit. Noting the pertinent passages in Scripture, we drew out of them the doctrine of the Holy Spirit that Christian and Reformed believers confess: that the Holy Spirit is truly and eternally God; that the Holy Spirit is a distinct person of the triune Godhead; and that the Holy Spirit sanctifies God’s church and children.

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* *The articles appearing under this theme are the substance of a lecture given in the Covenant Protestant Reformed Church of Northern Ireland on January 12, 2011.*

Previous article in this series: September 15, 2011, p. 488.

It is good that we examine these sins more particularly. Depraved by nature, God’s people are capable of committing every heinous sin imaginable, including most of these sins against the Holy Spirit. In fact, not only are we *capable* of committing such, but we are *prone* to commit such, so that only God’s grace prevents us from committing them. That Israel vexed God’s Holy Spirit (Is. 63:10) underscores our need for this grace. And implied in God’s warning that the church not grieve the Spirit (Eph. 4:30) and not quench the Spirit (I Thess. 5:19) is God’s promise of grace to those who seek it from Him.

One sin against the Holy Spirit, that of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, God’s people will never commit. To this particular sin, distinct from all others, we now turn our attention.

What this sin is

To this sin Jesus refers in Matthew 12:31-32, as well as in the parallel passages of Mark 3:28-29 and Luke 12:10. We read in Matthew 12:31-32: "Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come."

Also Hebrews 10:29 refers to this sin: "Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?"

Although Hebrews 6:4-6 and I John 15:16 do not expressly say that they refer to the sin against the Holy Spirit, they do in fact refer to this sin. I John 5:16 reads, "there is a sin unto death." Our Reformed fathers understood this text to refer to the sin against the Holy Spirit, for they refer to it in the Canons of Dordrecht, Head 5, Rejection of Errors 4, in that very connection. Hebrews 6:4-6 speaks of those who "were made partakers of the Holy Ghost" and who fell away, but says, about the real character of that sin, this: "they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame."

Let us be clear on what blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is.

Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is not just *any* sin against the Holy Spirit. Rather:

Blasphemy of the Spirit is the deliberate denial, rejection and contempt of the saving work of the Holy Spirit on the part of one who knows full well that the work is that of the Spirit, indeed, it may be, on the part of one who has himself "tasted of the heavenly gift, and [was] made partaker of the Holy Ghost" (Heb. 6:4).¹

The sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit has

¹ · David J. Engelsma, "The Holy Spirit and the Covenant of Grace," which is chapter 3 in the book *The Work of the Holy Spirit* (Ballymena, Northern Ireland, UK: The British Reformed Fellowship, 2010), p. 64.

several characteristics. All of the following are true when this sin is committed.

First, it involves speaking certain *words* that show that one hates the Holy Spirit and His work in the church. Blasphemy always shows itself in words.

Jesus underscored this by His words to the Jews in Matthew 12. Jesus had just healed one who was blind, dumb, and possessed with a devil. Responding to this miracle, the Pharisees said: "This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils" (v. 24). Jesus' answer in verses 27-28 was: "And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges. But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you." This accusation of the Pharisees that Jesus worked miracles by the power of the devil was their blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.

The second characteristic of this sin is that those who commit it are *in the sphere of the covenant, although not true members of the covenant*. This was true of the Pharisees as a whole, although not of every individual Pharisee (Nicodemus was a true disciple of Christ). And this explains why the writer to the Hebrews says that they "were made partakers of the Holy Ghost" (6:4), and that they were "sanctified" by "the blood of the covenant" (10:29).

Understood in their contexts, neither of these statements in Hebrews can mean that those who crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh (6:6), and who do despite to the Spirit of grace (10:29), were inwardly regenerated and sanctified, possessing the grace of salvation. God's Word says of them that they cannot be brought to repentance (6:6), and that they will experience God's vengeance and suffer a punishment sorer than death by stoning (10:29, 30). If these passages *do* teach that the Holy Spirit worked the grace of salvation in these people, then they also teach that these people *lost* that grace. This would contradict those passages that teach that God always preserves His grace in His people.

Rather, to understand these passages in Hebrews we must distinguish between the Spirit's saving work of applying the benefits of Christ to the elect sinner, and the Spirit's work of equipping a person with the

gifts necessary to serve the church. The passages in Hebrews speak of those who were members of Christian churches on earth, and who had gifts by which to serve these churches, but who did not receive the graces of salvation. (The same was true of the reprobate king Saul, who received the Spirit, and lost the Spirit—I Sam. 10:10 and 16:14).

Because these are in the sphere of the covenant, those who blaspheme the Spirit have some intellectual knowledge of the Spirit, and some experiential knowledge of the Spirit's power. Some of them may have experienced this power by being able to prophesy or to speak in tongues. But all of them would have experienced this power in that they intellectually understood the gospel, having "tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come" (Heb. 6:5).

The third characteristic of this sin is that the *hearts* of those who commit it are *impenitently hardened against the gospel*. Having once professed to believe, they now openly proclaim their unbelief, ridiculing the true gospel and those who believe it, and of this unbelief they do not repent. This follows from Hebrews 6:4-6 ("it is impossible...to renew them again unto repentance") and from the words of Jesus that this sin will not be forgiven one in this world, or in the world to come (Matt. 12:31-32).

Again I say that in the case of one who blasphemes the Holy Spirit, each of these three characteristics are true. Some elect children of God, either before or after their conversion, have blasphemed God, but are given to see their sin, hate it, and repent of it. Such have not committed the unforgivable sin. A case in point is the apostle Paul, a former Pharisee, who was "a blasphemer," but who "obtained mercy" because he did it "ignorantly in unbelief" (I Tim. 1:13).

He who repents of his sin, however heinous that sin may have been, knows he has not committed the unforgivable sin, for those who commit the unforgivable sin are not given grace to repent.

Why this sin is unforgivable

Jesus sets this sin in a category by itself by saying that it will not be forgiven either in this world or in the world to come. With these words, He teaches that this

sin is most offensive to the triune God and that it bars one from fellowship with this God now and forever.

Why will this sin not be forgiven?

The answer has nothing to do with a limitation in God Himself. That this sin is unforgivable does not suggest that God does not have enough power or mercy to forgive this sin; that His grace is not sufficient; that Jesus' death on the cross could not atone for it; or that the Spirit could not apply the blessings of salvation to one who committed it.

We should note carefully the helping verb that Jesus used in Matthew 12:31ff. He did not say that this sin "cannot" be forgiven. Rather, He said that it "shall not" be forgiven.

This is a promise. God will not forgive this sin.

This promise accords with God's justice.

This promise accords with God's justice generally, in that God's justice requires all sin to be punished with extreme punishment of body and soul. Manifesting both mercy and justice, God sent Christ to bear the punishment for the sins of all the elect. Those for whom Christ did not die (the reprobate) must bear their own guilt and curse. He who blasphemes the Spirit manifests himself to be reprobate. This is why, from God's viewpoint, this sin will not be forgiven: God forgives the sins of none for whom Christ did not die.

More specifically, from the viewpoint now of the sinner who blasphemes the Holy Spirit, this promise accords with God's justice because of how dreadful the sin is. No sin is small; every sin is an affront to the holy and majestic Jehovah. But to blaspheme Him, to do so as one who for a time confessed to believe the gospel, and to do so with a heart now resolutely hardened in unbelief—this is most offensive to Jehovah. Jehovah's wrath will fall on the men of Tyre and Sidon and of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment—but all the more severely will it fall on those who blaspheme the Holy Spirit.

God manifests His wisdom in carrying out this promise. In His wisdom, the sovereign God permits some men to speak evil against the Holy Spirit, in order to make manifest that they deserve nothing less than the everlasting punishment that He will send upon them. And He governs all things so that it becomes evident that they are hardened in their sin, and are

being prepared for the destruction to which they were appointed.

The impossibility of God's children committing this sin

From the fact that this sin will not be forgiven, it follows that God's children will never commit this sin.

The beautiful biblical doctrine of God's preservation of His saints in grace necessarily leads to this conclusion. If "he which hath begun a good work in [us] will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:6); and if we "are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (I Pet. 1:5); and if nothing shall separate us from the love of Christ (Rom. 8:35)—then those whom God has chosen from all eternity to salvation in Christ will certainly be brought to that salvation, and will be kept from committing this sin.

Jesus Himself taught this in John 10:27-29: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand."

Reformed churches and believers officially confess in the Canons of Dordrecht that it is impossible that God's children commit this sin. Having set forth the biblical doctrine of preservation in the fifth head, the fathers at the Synod of Dordt explicitly reject this error:

Error 4: Who teach that true believers and regenerate can sin the sin unto death or against the Holy Spirit.

Rejection: Since the same apostle John, after having spoken in the fifth chapter of his first epistle, verses 16 and 17, of those who sin unto death, and having forbidden to pray for them, immediately adds to this in verse 18: *We know that whosoever is begotten of God sinneth not* (meaning a sin of that character), *but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and the evil one toucheth him not* (I John 5:18).²

² · *The Confessions and Church Order of the Protestant Reformed Churches* (Grandville, MI: Protestant Reformed Churches in America, 2005), p. 177.

Yet Satan, the great accuser, assaults some of God's children, tormenting them with the fear that they have committed this sin, that their entire religious life on earth must be one of hypocrisy, and that they will not be finally saved in heaven.

God's Word and the gospel of grace provide us with an answer to these assaults of Satan.

From the Scriptures, we learn that one who hates sin because he desires to be pleasing to God is a child of God (Matt. 5:4, 6). We know further that one who hates his sin and turns in true sorrow to Jesus Christ does find in Him and His work all things necessary for salvation. And such find in Christ the power to live a godly life. Thus we make our calling and election sure: "for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall" (II Pet. 1:10).

The point is this: rather than concluding that he has committed the unforgivable sin, and therefore *not looking* to Christ, the child of God must look to Christ, find in Him alone the assurance of salvation, and then conclude that he has not committed the unforgivable sin. He then returns this answer to Satan: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Rom. 8:1).

If any reader continues to be plagued by the fear that he has committed this sin, and he needs more help in finding assurance in Christ, he should talk to his pastor or another godly, sympathetic believer.

But remember this: the very fact that one is afraid he has committed this sin is evidence that he has *not* committed this sin. For, first, this fear shows that he longs for heaven and fellowship with the true God. Second, this fear shows that he truly hates sin. And third, this fear indicates a desire for grace to repent of one's sins and live according to God's law. Such longing for heaven, such hatred of sin, and such desire for grace characterize the true child of God, whom God will preserve until we reach heavenly perfection.

God forgives every sin of which one truly repents. True repentance, being worked in us by God's grace, is evidence that one is a child of God. None to whom Christ gives eternal life will ever perish. ☞

The Covenantal Assembly (1)

O come, let us sing unto the Lord: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms. For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods. In his hand are the deep places of the earth: the strength of the hills is his also. The sea is his, and he made it: and his hands formed the dry land. O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker. For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand.

Psalm 95:1-7a

Introduction

There are few subjects in the church today more controversial than worship. People talk about “worship wars.” In the same church you may have services titled “traditional,” to appeal to the older crowd, and services entitled “contemporary,” to appeal to the younger crowd. This reveals that the driving force in worship is often personal preferences. This is something that can be a danger also for us.

But the preeminent danger for us in the Protestant Reformed Churches is that we not understand what we are doing in worship and why we are doing it. God does not desire that His people simply go through the motions. We must worship with understanding. We bring God no glory if we do not know what we are doing in worship, and have no desire to engage in it. And we miss out on the edifying experience of worship when we do not understand our worship.

In that light, I begin a series of articles on the principles of Reformed and Presbyterian worship. I hope to follow that, some time down the road, with a series applying those principles to a typical Protestant Reformed worship service. The title for the series is “O

Come Let Us Worship!” taken from Psalm 95:6. There is, of course, personal worship, and there is family worship; there is the fact that all of life is to be worship; and then there is corporate worship—worship officially performed by the congregation. In this series we consider the latter, what God has to say, in the Scriptures, about the *public, corporate* worship of His name.

There are three main principles that will be treated in this series. The first is that public worship is a covenantal assembly meeting with the living God. The second is what is called the dialogical principle of worship. And the third is the regulative principle of worship.

Let’s begin by looking into the principle that public corporate worship is a covenantal assembly.

Not Just Individuals, But an Assembly

Fundamental to the nature of Reformed and biblical corporate worship is that those who gather for it do so as an *assembly*. They are not a haphazard collection of individuals who get together in a building. They are an assembly made up of many, but who yet are one.

They are a *lawfully gathered* assembly, constituted for the purpose of public worship. The local church is a body overseen by a council and consistory, representing the offices of Christ Himself. She is officially called to assemble together by this governing body, which speaks with the authority of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ Himself, therefore, establishes this assembly and calls her to come as one body.

This is why most Reformed and Presbyterian churches have a “call to worship” at the beginning of the worship service. It shows that God Himself is calling and constituting an assembly through the officebearers. This is unique for Sunday worship. There is no call to worship before Bible Study or programs or lectures. The call to worship is God calling His body together into the official assembly of public worship.

She assembles officially for worship as the *body of Jesus Christ*. She is a redeemed assembly. Christ has

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shed His blood for her. Christ has imputed to her His righteousness. And Christ has united her together. She comes therefore as an extension of who He is, just as the body is the extension of the head. Jesus is in heaven, having entered the most holy place not made with hands. There He lives before the face of God and in His human nature brings worship. Here on earth the official worship of the church is an extension of what Christ our head does before God, adoring Him in the heavenly sanctuary. When we come for public worship, we are constituted under Him as a gathering of His body, and He therefore, as our head, leads us into worship.

The Old Testament emphasized this corporate nature of public worship. In Leviticus 23, where the people were commanded to come together for the great feasts, the phrase is repeated, “you are a holy convocation.” That is, you are an *assembly* of the people made holy in Christ. You are officially and visibly called together as a body. The section of Psalm 95 quoted above leads us to contemplate this corporate nature of worship. Psalm 95 has been recognized as a call for the church to assemble publicly for worship throughout the entire history of the Christian church and, even before the time of Christ, in the ancient Jewish church.¹ Notice, in verses 1 and 2, how it calls us together: “O come, let *us* sing unto the LORD: let *us* make a joyful noise to the rock of *our* salvation. Let *us* come before his presence with thanksgiving. O come, let *us* worship and bow down: let *us* kneel before the LORD *our* maker” (italics mine, CJG).

In the New Testament, Hebrews 10:25 speaks of not forsaking the *assembling* of ourselves together. That is what the worship service is, an official assembling of the body of Christ. The New Testament word for church, *ekklesia*, also captures this corporate idea. The word means *assembly*. This corporate consciousness is reflected even in our practice. The salutation is, “beloved congregation of Jesus Christ.” It is not, “beloved individuals who happen to be in this building,” but “beloved assembled body of which every individual is a part.”

This is important to remember in a culture where the individual and his desires are valued above the collective, and where people will forsake corporate worship

¹ Leupold, H. C. *Exposition of The Psalms*. 8th ed. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1969. 675.

because they say they can worship by themselves. We certainly come as individuals, and we bring our own personal worship on Sunday, but we do so as part of a body. This is not something we can do at home by ourselves. It is not something we can do alone with our Bibles. We are called out and called together before God. When I participate in the worship of the church, I do not stand as an individual singing, but I join my voice with the assembly of which I am a member. We come together as one.

Called Together to Meet With God

The reason why we are officially called together as a body is to meet with our God face to face. It is a *covenantal* assembly, called together by God to meet with Him in fellowship. The covenant is structured fellowship with God. In corporate worship the church experiences the height of this covenantal life on earth.

This was true of public corporate worship in the Old Testament. The tabernacle of worship was called the tent of the congregation for this very reason. Exodus 39:32: “Thus was all the work of the tabernacle of the *tent of the congregation* finished: and the children of Israel did according to all that the LORD commanded Moses, so did they.” A better translation for tent of the congregation would be tent of *meeting*. It was where the congregation met with God.

The temple worship was this as well. The people gathered in the courts of the temple. And God, dwelling in the Holy of Holies, upon the ark, met with the assembly in the structured fellowship of worship.

Psalm 95:2 speaks of this covenantal aspect of worship explicitly when it calls, “O come before his presence!” The most literal translation of that would be, “Let us meet His face!” That is what worship is—the assembly meets the face of Jehovah God in a special way.

In the Old Testament tabernacle and temple, however, there was still a distance between God and His people. Only the high priest could go into the Holy of Holies before the face of God, and corporate worship could take place only in the tabernacle or temple. In the New Testament the idea that worship is meeting with God face to face becomes richer. Now there is no earthly high priest, and God will meet directly with us

wherever we are assembled. Instead of meeting God in Jerusalem or in the tabernacle, now Jesus says in Matthew 18:20, “wherever two or three are gathered in my name, I am with you.” In the worship of the assembly, no matter how small or large the assembly is, we meet our God. As Calvin recognized, “After the covenant of grace has flowed to us...let us know and be fully persuaded that wherever the faithful who worship him purely and in due form according to the appointment of his Word, are assembled together to engage in the solemn acts of religious worship, he is graciously present, and presides in the midst of them.”²

The Spirit works this of course. He brings us to God by giving us the desire to come to worship. He brings God to us by driving into our hearts His word that we sing, pray, read, and hear preached. The Spirit works so that we experience that. God really comes to us in the official worship of the church. This meeting with God is the experience of the covenant of grace. We do not come to church simply to talk about the covenant. We come to experience it! God with us!

Church services are more than just hearing a sermon. The sermon is a part of the service, an essential part. But the service as a whole is, as we will see later, designed to lead us into the presence of the Almighty. Gathered together, *we become* the tent of meeting, the building where God condescends to meet with us. In the words of the songs that sink into our hearts, take over our thoughts, and drive our affections; in the prayers that recognize we are in His holy presence; in the gospel read and preached by which God releases overtures of love and callings for our lives—in all these, we meet with the Living God.

If you do not experience this, it is because you do not believe it, or are distracted in the service, or do not take worship seriously enough. When we come to worship, we are seeking the presence of God. And God does condescend to come to us by His Spirit and through faith.

The Covenantal Assembly and the Antithesis

That worship is covenantal implies that it is also the fundamental expression of the antithesis. The an-

tithesis is a God-created spiritual separation from the world and consecration to Jehovah. In public corporate worship, God is creating an antithesis. He calls us out of the world and to Himself. He says, “You are mine. Come out from among them and be ye separate.” During the week we are called to live a life different from the world and in communion with God. And we seek to do that. But we are so distracted and filled with thoughts about our work, or about people, or about issues in society, that we are not captivated by Jehovah God. We are in the world, and our souls are pulled toward the things of this life. We feel ourselves tempted. Sometimes we resist temptation, other times not. Sometimes we are all-out enveloped by the world. We see that we were thinking like the world, we were acting like the world. Our minds and souls were influenced. Perhaps we were even considering making decisions that, when we think back on them after worship, were so worldly. But in worship God calls us out. That should be the experience of the service. It is relief; it is an oasis in the desert; it is a break in the battle.

As God called Israel out of Egypt and to Himself at Sinai, so in every service He calls us out of the world and to Himself. God sends out His call, like a man to his lover, to put everything down and come apart for awhile in covenant love. It is a calling to a place of safety and spiritual security for a time as we meet with our God. It is in worship that we are set before the face of the living God, and we worship *Him*. It is His majesty, His glory, His gospel, His truth, that we come to adore. We ascribe to Him glory and praise and thanksgiving. It is in the worship service that we are finally set totally apart so that it is all about Him.

During the week we have personal and family worship of course. This is important, it is lovely, and it must be meaningful and worshipful. But for most of us it is not until we get to the assembly before God’s face that we really worship with all our heart and mind fixed upon Him alone. It is there that we really put everything else aside and, with God’s people who are gathered there, exalt His name. It is there especially that He increases and we decrease. We say to God there, “It may have looked at times as if I did not love Thee, as if I was not consecrated to Thee. Now I repent of that and here in the public assembly I tell Thee that I

² Calvin, John. *Commentary on the Book of Psalms*. Vol. 4. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979. 122.

love Thee more than this world.” At times we have been selfish in the week. But there we can set all of self aside and simply exalt God for who He is. There we express that though the world, the devil, and our own flesh get the better of us at times, in our heart of hearts we adore Him and Him alone.

That’s worship. Worship is giving one’s all to Him. It is humble adoration. The very word “worship” means to bow down. It is honoring Him, praising Him. It is the decrease of self, and the increase of His matchless name in our minds and hearts. And that happens as God meets with us in the covenantal assembly. 

WHEN THOU SITTEST IN THINE HOUSE

REV. ARIE DEN HARTOG

Raising the Sons of the Covenant

God blesses our covenant homes with sons and daughters. Particularly blessed are our homes when the Lord gives us some sons and some daughters. Contrary to past Asian tradition, which we learned during the early years of being a missionary in Singapore, sons are not a greater blessing than daughters. The prayer of the psalmist for the future well-being and blessing of the Israel of God in the world was: “That our sons be as plants grown up in their youth: and that our daughters may be as cornerstones, polished after the similitude of a palace” (Ps. 144: 12). Psalter number 393 renders these words of Psalm 144 with the interesting words of its first verse: “Oh happy land, whose sons in youth, in sturdy strength and noble truth, like plants in vigor spring; whose daughters fair, a queenly race, are like the cornerstones that grace the palace of a king.”

In many respects the sons and daughters of the covenant must be raised in the same way, in the fear and nurture and discipline of the Lord. There are also, however, important differences. We abhor the worldly philosophy of egalitarianism and the drive toward unisex. Our sons must be raised as noble sons and our daughters as beautiful daughters. God made each of them different by His creation ordinance. In harmony with that ordinance He gave each his or her particular role and calling. This is not a matter of changing culture or the prevailing philosophy of the times in which we are

living. God has spoken. He has given us His unchanging Word. The foundational principles for a life of godliness for all time is clearly given in the Scriptures, as Paul also wrote to Timothy in II Timothy 3:16 and 17.

There are also sins that are more particularly characteristic of one gender than they are of the other. These sins must be uprooted and driven far from the hearts and lives of our children already in the days of their youth. This must be done with strong urgent warning and faithful godly discipline in our covenant homes to prevent, by God’s grace, our sons from going astray in the future in a worldly life of disobedience and rebellion.

We must raise our sons and daughters with a view to the future place they will have in covenant homes and in the church of Jesus Christ. Our children are from birth, according to God’s gracious covenant purpose, included in His church and kingdom. The Lord is pleased to continue His covenant in the line of the generations. He raises up from our children members for His continuing church on earth. We must raise our children to be servants of King Jesus who are well prepared and mighty to promote the great causes of His kingdom in this world and live for His glory in the whole of their life.

Our children must be taught from childhood to love the church of Jesus Christ of which they by grace are members. They must be taught to be faithful, zealous, active members. The church needs elders and deacons and ministers, who most often come out of the bosom of our covenant families. The best and most gifted of our sons ought to be encouraged to consider the high

Rev. denHartog is pastor of Southwest Protestant Reformed Church in Grandville, Michigan.

calling of the ministry. They need to be taught that there is no higher calling. Even the highly honored and respected secular professions of this world with great promise of lucrative rewards are not to be compared to the calling of the gospel ministry. There always is an urgent need for ministers and missionaries, strong and orthodox, to preach the gospel and to fulfill the great commission that Christ gave to His church.

Our sons must be prepared to be strong and responsible covenant heads of families, well able to provide for and support their families, well equipped to guide and maintain and protect their covenant homes. How evident it sometimes is in the church that strong leaders in covenant homes produce strong families in succeeding generations. It is also true that weak covenant homes will grow weaker from generation to generation and soon be gone because of apostasy and being overcome and destroyed by worldliness. This is a fearful thing, of which God's Word gives examples and warnings. See Psalm 78.

Whether or not our sons will be married, and whether or not they will be in a special office in the church, they must all be prepared to be knowledgeable, strong, and courageous leaders for the benefit of the future church. They must be equipped by their training in the covenant home for the great work of maintaining and advancing the causes of the kingdom of God in the world.

One of the greatest qualifications necessary for responsible leadership in the home and church is strength, spiritual strength. This strength will manifest itself in various ways. The church on earth is the church militant. She must stand against the onslaughts of the devil and the evil forces and powers of principalities and dominions inspired by the devil that seek to overthrow the church and destroy her out of the world. The church needs members that, even in the days of their youth, are able to endure hardship as good soldiers of Christ and courageous to stand for the truth over against the enemy and the increasing apostasy and ungodliness of our age.

Our sons must not be raised so they turn out to be effeminate. Our sons must not be raised to be soft and weak, lacking manly vigor, without principle and courage, driven only by emotion and interested in nothing more than a life of ease in the world.

To be strong in the Lord, our covenant sons must be raised to be strong in the truth and in the fear of the name of the Lord. To be strong in the truth of God there must be a mature knowledge and understanding of the truth. There must be spiritual discretion, so that our sons are able to distinguish the truth from the lie. There must be strong commitment to the truth of God and great zeal to stand for this truth without wavering and without giving way to the many enemies of the truth in the world.

Our sons must receive doctrinal training in their covenant homes. This training will be enforced and developed through the ministry of the church, through hearing sound and strong preaching year after year in the church and through good solid catechism instruction, but there must be foundational training in theology and doctrine in our covenant homes. This does not mean that our covenant homes have to be mini-seminaries, but every son of the covenant must have some foundation in doctrine and theology. It is delightful to the pastor who teaches catechism over the years, as I by grace have, to be able to instruct young men in the catechism class that already have received a strong foundation in their covenant homes.

There should be theological discussion going on in our covenant homes. In a natural way such theological discussion will be going on among lovers of the truth when there is controversy in the church. Controversy is a grievous thing in the church. None of us wants to experience the grievous consequences and division of unholy strife in the church. Our modern age has no stomach for these things. But sometimes God's people need to be stirred up by controversy in order to gain a deeper appreciation for the preciousness of the truth, and to be equipped with courage and strength to defend it for the glory of God at all cost, even risking their own lives.

Even when, thankfully, there is no controversy among the members of a given true church, there will always be controversy and apostasy in the church world at large. Courage and great strength are required to defend the truth, and few are equipped to do so. The last times in which we are living are days of dreadful apostasy, even as the Lord Himself prophesied. There are many deceivers that are gone out into the world. Many times

they will enter the very church of God itself to destroy her from within and, if possible, to lead her members astray from the truth. The sons of the covenant must be prepared to be valiant soldiers of Christ.

Many young men are destroyed also because of the passions of sin in their own sinful natures and the temptations of worldliness. The most prevalent sin, and one that brings many sons, even sons of the covenant, to ruin is the grievous sin of immorality. The book of Proverbs, written especially for the sons of the covenant, warns repeatedly about the dangers and power of the strange adulterous woman of the world. She has great power to tempt and entice with the prospect of

the excitement of the flesh. The world glories in the sexual prowess of its men. Many strong men fall to this temptation. The ways of the strange woman lead to destruction and hell. Even when covenant sons are not totally ruined by the power and temptation of this sin, they are often so devastated that it is very difficult and even almost impossible for them ever again to be strong covenant fathers and faithful husbands for the daughters of the covenant to marry. This is the cause of the cutting off of many generations of the covenant in the wrath of the Lord. In a future article I will continue with this subject. ∞

CLASSIS WEST REPORT

REV. DOUGLAS KUIPER

September 7, 2011

Classis West met in regular session on Wednesday, September 7, in the facilities of the Peace PRC of Lansing, IL. Rev. Dennis Lee chaired this meeting.

The highlight of the day was the examination of Mr. Brian Huizinga, pastor-elect of the Hope PRC of Redlands, CA. At an official worship service the evening before Classis convened, Mr. Huizinga preached a sermon on Isaiah 55:6-7 under the theme "Seek Ye the LORD." On Wednesday Classis examined Mr. Huizinga in the six loci of dogmatics, knowledge of Scripture, knowledge of the confessions, controversy, and practica. Classis approved Mr. Huizinga's exam and advised Hope PRC to proceed with his ordination into the min-

istry of the Word and sacraments. The synodical deputies from Classis East concurred with this decision.

The churches of the Classis and all members of the denomination rejoice in the divine gift of another man to preach and teach in the service of Jehovah.

In other business, Classis West referred back to a consistory a matter of discipline. Classis also provided classical appointments for the yet-vacant congregation in Edgerton, MN.

The expenses of this classis totaled \$10,593.92.

Classis is scheduled to meet next on March 7, 2012, in Redlands, CA.

Rev. Douglas Kuiper
Stated Clerk ∞

NEWS FROM OUR CHURCHES

MR. BENJAMIN WIGGER

Young Adult Activities

The congregation of the Loveland, CO PRC extended a hearty welcome to those attending the Young Adult Retreat sponsored by their young adults on August 22-25. Rev. S. Key, pastor of Loveland, was this year's

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

featured speaker. He spoke on "Seeking First God's Kingdom," from Matthew 6. No doubt those attending the retreat enjoyed a beneficial discussion on submission to authority. Those attending this year also enjoyed the wonderful accommodations at the Glenwood Suites Hotel and some great Colorado activities, including whitewater rafting, hiking in the magnificent Rocky Mountains, and

a relaxing trip to one of the world's largest mineral hot springs pools.

Young People's Activities

The Young People's Society of the Hull, IA PRC recently reminded their congregation about their upcoming fall pop-can drive on Saturday, September 10. The young people were "volunteering" to pick up any pop cans the members of Hull

might have lying around. The young people also used the opportunity to remind their congregation that they had set up accounts at two stores, one in Sioux Center, the other in Sheldon, that made it possible for one to return pop cans there and have the deposit refund applied to the Young People's account. Proceeds were being applied to the 2012 Young People's Convention.

Anyone looking for a good breakfast on Labor Day morning, September 5, was invited to a Pancake Breakfast hosted by the Young People's Society of the Grace PRC in Standale, MI. The breakfast took place in the gym of Hope PR Christian School. Donations went toward the 2012 Young People's Convention.

It appears that the young people who attended this summer's young people's convention may have been exposed, unawares at the time, to MRSA. In response to this possibility, the host congregation, the Randolph, WI PRC, sent out an e-mail to inform all the conventioners of the possibility of their having come in contact with someone who had MRSA, and they also felt it would be beneficial to inform each congregation as well, because the infection may have spread beyond conventioners. MRSA is an extremely serious bacterial infection that cannot be left untreated. The symptoms, which may not show themselves for several days or weeks, may first appear as a skin rash or as small red bumps that resemble pimples, and may be accompanied by fever. The rash is only a symptom. If it is treated right away, this is not a serious infection. If you see any of these symptoms, go to the doctor ASAP.

MRSA can become life-threatening if left untreated.

Mission Activities

On Monday morning, August 29, from 8:00 A.M. to noon, all of the young people and young adults of the Berean PRC in Manila of the Philippines and those from Christian Faith Ministries were invited to join the YP/YA from First Reformed of Bulacan, at the home of Rev. Daniel and Sharon Kleyn at the Beverly Hills Village. There was scheduled a time for Bible devotions, singing, food, and various activities together.

A recent bulletin from the Georgetown PRC in Hudsonville, MI included an update of their on-going work in India. Their India Committee reports that the English services, followed by a service in Tamil each Sunday, are going well, and have attracted some from the Christian Medical College in Vellore. The orphanage is now able to offer computer training to the orphans. The tutor program is going well, with 15-20 children in two different villages receiving instruction in Bible history. Emanuel Shigh, a young man interested in the ministry, and living in Calcutta, India, has joined the Monday doctrine studies with Paul Raj and Georgetown's Doctrine Committee.

Sister-Church Activities

Rev. Martyn McGeown, missionary pastor of our sister church, the Covenant PRC in Ballymena, Northern Ireland, working with the Limerick Reformed Fellowship in Limerick, Republic of Ireland, traveled to Wales on September 1 to give a lecture in Porthcawl on the subject, "Friendship with God," looking at how friendship with God is possible, and on what its blessedness consists.

Congregation Activities

The members of the Grace PRC in Standale, MI were reminded to sign up for a bowling outing at nearby Lincoln Country Club on August 31. The outing was for any member of Grace Church and was free of charge. Just imagine if our other congregations around Grace knew about this ahead of time. Grace's membership would have swelled to double or triple its normal number for those two hours.

The children of the Hope PRC in Redlands, CA presented their annual year-end Sunday School program Sunday evening, August 28, after their evening worship service.

The Georgetown PRC in Hudsonville, MI, sponsored a Dave Ramsey Financial Peace Class Tuesday evenings at Georgetown beginning on September 6. The class featured Dave Ramsey videos, teaching practical, godly lessons on saving, debt elimination, investing, and real estate, to name a few.

Minister Activities

With the acceptance of calls by Candidates Nathan Decker and Brian Huizinga, our three remaining vacant churches formed new trios and extended calls on Sunday, August 28.

The Edgerton, MN PRC extended a call to Candidate Jonathan Mahtani.

Candidate Mahtani also received the call from the Cornerstone PRC in Dyer, IN to serve as their next pastor.

Rev. Andrew Lanning, presently serving our denomination as pastor of the Faith PRC in Jenison, MI, received the call to serve as pastor of the Hope PRC in Walker, MI. 

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Lecture

■ Please reserve Friday, October 28 for a Reformation Day lecture by Prof. Dykstra entitled "False Prophets and the Certain End of the World: What the Reformation Can Teach Us."

The lecture will be held at the Protestant Reformed Church of Crete at 7 P.M.

Wedding Anniversary

■ We praise God for His merciful care of our parents,

RICH and KATHY FEENSTRA, as they celebrated 35 years of marriage on September 24. We pray with certainty that He will continue to guide them through this pilgrimage. We thank Him for the way they continually direct our attention to His goodness, and by His grace they also have been an excellent example of self-sacrificial love. John 13:34-35: "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."

- ❖ Steve and Lauren Feenstra
Megan, Keegan
- ❖ Keith and Holly Feenstra
Cody, Janelle
- ❖ Doug and Rachel Feenstra
Dylan, Ashlee, Rylee
- ❖ Jared and Lisa Langerak

Hudsonville, Michigan

Notice

■ The Northwest Iowa PR school has been without an administrator now for the past three school years. We are earnestly seeking an administrator and 6-8th grade teacher for the 2012-2013 school year. Interested applicants please contact Paul DeJong at (605) 553-7298 or pauldejongmd@gmail.com.

Wedding Anniversary

■ On October 16, 2011, our parents and grandparents,

DOUG and JUNE GRIFFIOEN, will celebrate 30 years of marriage. It is our prayer that they will continue to experience His love, living their lives in service to Him.

"He will bless them that fear the LORD, both small and great. The LORD shall increase you more and more, you and your children" (Psalm 115:13, 14).

- ❖ Jeff and Kristin Griffioen
- ❖ Emily Griffioen
Kobe
- ❖ Steve and Sheila Griffioen
Austin, Parker
- ❖ Todd Griffioen
- ❖ Nate and Esther VanMeeteren
- ❖ Betsy Griffioen
- ❖ Lucy Griffioen

Hudsonville, Michigan

Resolution of Sympathy

■ The Men's and Ladies' Society of First PRC (Holland) expresses its sincere and heartfelt Christian sympathy to fellow members Richard and Jan Moore in the recent loss of their precious daughter,

BRENDA BRANDS.

May they be comforted by the words of Scripture in Psalm 116:15, "Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints."

Al Elzinga, President
Audrey Starrett, Secretary

Congratulations

■ With thankfulness to God, we congratulate

REV. STEVEN KEY

on his 25-year anniversary in the ministry. "And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" (Romans 10:15).

Council of the Loveland Protestant Reformed Church
Victor Solanyk, Clerk

Resolution of Sympathy

■ The Men's and Ladies' Society of SW PRC expresses Christian sympathy to fellow member Mr. Jay Boone in the death of his wife,

MRS. NORMA BOONE.

"Nevertheless I am continually with thee, thou hast holden me by my right hand. Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel and afterward receive me to glory" (Psalm 73:23, 24).

Marv Kamps, President
Fran Feenstra, Secretary

Bound Volumes

■ With the September 15th issue of the *Standard Bearer*, volume 87 is finished. If you would like your own issues bound, please deliver them to the **RFPA office** before the end of October. For additional orders, call Paula at (616) 457-5970.

Reformed Witness Hour

October 2011

Date	Topic	Text
October 2	"Like-mindedness in Marriage"	Romans 15:3-7
October 9	"Not Weary in Well Doing"	Galatians 6:9
October 16	"Spiritual Lethargy"	Song of Solomon 5:1-8
October 23	"Recovery of the Biblical Gospel (1)"	Romans 1:16
October 30	"Recovery of the Biblical Gospel (2)"	Romans 1:16