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Prof. Barrett Gritters

World

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Fighting ourselves

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Pornography

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Meditation

Rev. John Marcus, pastor of the First Protestant Reformed Church in Edmonton, Alberta

A prayer for God's continued mercies

Let thy mercies come also unto me, O LORD, even thy salvation, according to thy word.

Psalm 119:41

Every child of God lives in constant need of Jehovah's mercies.

We may all expect difficulties and hardship in our pilgrimage. It is through much tribulation that we enter into the kingdom of God. Whether single or married, young or old, in the work place or in the home, we are bound to experience turmoil. Circumstances make our spiritual walk difficult, so much so that at times we might wonder if we are able to continue.

How we need God's mercies!

Mercy is not something we need only at one point in our lives in order to be saved; the psalmist teaches that each and every one of us stands in constant need of God's mercy. That is why he prays, "Let thy mercies come also unto me, O LORD, even thy salvation."

The fact that we pray for God's mercies is an indication that God has already shown us mercy. God is always first. And yet, as children of God, regenerated by the Spirit of God, we continue to stand in need of God's mercy each moment of every day.

Mercy is God's everlasting and sovereign affection for us, according to which He wills us to be perfectly blessed in Him, to taste His own blessedness, and according to which He leads us through death to the highest possible life of covenant friendship. Mercy is thus revealed when God delivers us from the greatest evil of sin and its punishment and brings us into the greatest good of covenant fellowship with Himself. Included in His mercy is the destruction of all His and our enemies.

When God led Israel across the Red Sea and destroyed Pharaoh and his army, Israel sang about God's mercy. Significantly, they understood that mercy could only come to them as they were a redeemed people: "Thou in thy *mercy* hast led forth the people which thou hast *redeemed*: thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation" (Ex. 15:13). Mercy is based

upon their redemption by Jesus Christ as that redemption was pictured in the Passover lamb.

According to His mercy God delivered Israel from a great evil and guided them to the greatest good: the place of His holy habitation. The mercy pictured in their deliverance from Egypt was, as it were, a beginning of His mercy towards His people. Even after that deliverance, Israel needed God's continued mercy to guide them through the wilderness to His holy habitation. They needed God's mercy to protect them from their enemies.

Israel needed God's mercy to give them, not merely a picture of covenant fellowship but the reality of it. Israel needed deliverance not merely from Egypt but from their slavery to sin. And they needed God's mercy from day to day as they battled against their spiritual enemies.

So too every one of us stands in constant need of God's mercy. We need God's mercies that deliver us from the greatest evil of sin and the punishment that we deserve. And we constantly need His mercies that bring to us the greatest good of fellowship with God Himself.

Therefore, salvation is not only God showing us *one* mercy; salvation consists of His *many* mercies to us. According to the Hebrew parallelism in this text, God's salvation and His mercies are inseparable. "Let thy *mercies* come also unto me, O LORD, even thy *salvation*, according to thy word. Salvation is a multifaceted blessing consisting of many mercies bestowed. Therefore, the psalmist prays for God's *mercies* in the plural.

The implication is that when God mercifully grants salvation, He does not merely redeem us and then leave us to accomplish the rest of our salvation in our own strength. God did not merely redeem His people Israel with the blood of the Passover lamb, but in His mercy He also broke the power of Pharaoh and his army. In His mercy, He led His people through the wilderness with the cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night. In His mercy, He fed them with manna along the way and gave them water from the rock. In His mercy, He protected them from their enemies and finally brought them into the promised land. God's mercies to Israel are the multitude of gracious acts by which He delivered them from bondage and brought them to the promised land.

So too, when God saves us, He not only begins a good work in us, but also He performs it until the day of Jesus Christ. When God begets us, it is unto a lively hope of the glory to come. He will perfect that which concerns us; He will never forsake the work of His hands. Our salvation is a matter of many mercies.

His mercies began already in eternity when He loved us with an everlasting love. He performed the mercy promised to our fathers in the sending of His only begotten Son to redeem us. In His great mercy, He quickened us together with Christ, even when we were dead in sins. Even now, God calls us to come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. We are vessels of mercy, which He has afore prepared unto glory. His mercies are new every morning.

In whatever circumstances we find ourselves, we need God's continued mercies. We need Him to forgive us and blot out the guilt of our sin on a daily basis. We need Him to lead us through the wilderness of this world. We need Him to teach us the way in which we should walk. We need Him to protect us from our deadly enemies—the devil, the world, and our own sinful flesh. We need Him to preserve us in the way. We need Him to apply salvation to us every step of the way until He brings us to glory.

So we pray and confidently expect an answer because He has promised mercy in His word; “Let thy mercies come also unto me, O LORD, even thy salvation, according to thy word.”

We must never think we could earn God's mercies. The only basis for His mercies is the work of Jesus Christ.

As He represented the living God, bearing witness to the truth, His enemies heaped reproach on Him. They called Him a deceiver and said He cast out devils by the prince of devils. They called Him a destroyer of the temple. They said He was trying to usurp Caesar's throne. When Jesus finally confessed the truth that He was the Christ, the Son of the living God, they called Him a blasphemer, and nailed Him to the cross.

On the cross, they continued their reproaches: “He saved others, himself he cannot save.” “If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.”

To their cruel reproaches, Jesus gave an answer. Not the answer they wanted, but the answer that glorified God: He stayed on the cross as King of the Jews to redeem us. At last, He cried out, “It is finished; Father into thy hands, I commend my Spirit.”

God did not leave Him in the grave but, His justice being fully satisfied, He owned Jesus as His beloved Son.

Now Jesus rules in heaven over all to give us grace, mercy, and peace. God's mercies towards us all have their fountain in Jesus Christ.

In that confidence we pray for continued mercies!

Why do we pray for God's mercies? Because we want to show our thankfulness to God with a bold confession of His name. So the psalmist declares, “So shall I have wherewith to answer him that reproacheth me” (v. 42a).

How difficult for us to give a bold answer to the wicked! If we seek to be bold in our own strength, how often we end up like Peter: “I know not this man of whom you speak!” We are so easily ashamed of the name of God when a right confession would bring us into difficulty. How we need to watch and pray, “Let thy mercies come also unto me, O LORD...” or else we fail.

When the adversary accuses us as unworthy of God's favor, we need mercy to strengthen us so that we answer, “I trust in thy word” (v. 42). We need God's mercy to show us that our worthiness is in Jesus Christ.

When the world says there is joy in the way of wickedness, we need God's mercy to strengthen us so that we answer, “I trust in thy word.”

The psalmist does not merely want God's word of truth in his head; he wants to confess it with his mouth: “And take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth” (v. 43). If we are ashamed for a time to confess the truth, we pray “Father, do not take that word utterly out of my mouth. Give me grace that I may speak Thy word of truth. Give me the confidence to know that one day Thou wilt execute judgment and prove that my trust in Thee is not in vain.”

Not only do we seek God's mercies in order to make a bold confession, we also pray for His mercies because we desire a godly walk by which to show our thankfulness to Him for mercies past.

The psalmist expresses his thankfulness to God in five ways.

In the first place, he has a *regard* for God's holy will: “So shall I keep thy law continually for ever and ever” (v. 44b). Thankfulness desires the glory of God in whatever we do, even in our eating and drinking.

Secondly, he desires a godly *walk* of thankfulness: “And I will walk at liberty: for I seek thy precepts” (v. 45). Not that we abuse our liberty, pretending that we are free from God's precepts. That is evident from the second half of the verse; our liberty is rather freedom to seek God's precepts, according to which He instructs us in the way to glorify Him.

Third, the psalmist expresses his desire for a godly walk of thankfulness in the use of his *tongue*: “I will speak of thy testimonies also before kings, and will not

be ashamed” (v. 46). That overlaps with his purpose of being a bold witness. He wants to be faithful, so that he would even speak God’s testimonies before hateful and persecuting kings.

Fourth, the psalmist expresses his desire for a godly walk of thankfulness as regards the affections of his *heart*: “And I will delight myself in thy commandments, which I have loved” (v. 47). Only when God shows us mercy do we begin to love Him and delight in His commandments.

Then lastly, the psalmist expresses His desire for a godly walk of thankfulness by the actions of his *hands*. “My hands also will I lift up unto thy commandments,

which I have loved; and I will meditate in thy statutes” (v. 48). The hand is the chief instrument of doing. So when the psalmist says, “I will lift up my *hands*,” he shows his sincere desire to do what God commands.

With the psalmist, we want our hearts, tongues, feet, and hands all to be joined in praise and thanksgiving to our merciful God.

In every circumstance—in times of joy and times of sadness, in singleness or marriage, as young people or elderly saints, in the work place, in the school, or in the home—what a privilege to pray with confidence: “Let thy mercies come also unto me.”



Editorial

Prof. Barrett Gritters, professor of Practical Theology in the Protestant Reformed Seminary

The necessity of training elders

Newly installed elders are just opening their eyes to the task the Lord gives them, and it is not an easy one. You who have never served before are likely more than a little awestruck by the responsibility. To rule Christ’s church?! It is beyond your abilities. Even you who sat in the elders’ bench before are awed, because experience taught you actually how weighty the work is—far beyond any natural abilities you have.

Am I qualified for this work? That is the question that follows you to the elders’ pew to supervise the preaching, that goes with you on the house call to address a wayward young person, and that rings in your ears when the consistory president asks for a vote to declare a member outside of the kingdom of heaven. Am I qualified for *this* work? This work of determining whether the preacher is orthodox or whether a protest against an officebearer is legitimate. This work of wielding the keys of the kingdom of heaven. This work of representing Jesus Christ with regard to the eternal destiny of men and women.

At first glance, the church seems to give very little formal training for this great work of ruling in the church on behalf of Christ. Accompanying the letter asking you to accept a nomination likely came a reminder that, if you are elected, you will be required to sign the “Formula of Subscription.” But aside from reading the “Formula” to remind yourself (or learn for the first time) what it says, probably little more is required of you to prepare for the task.

But the importance of *properly qualified* elders cannot be emphasized enough.

Be assured that this editorial is not intended to embarrass any elder as to his lack of qualification, or to shame any man sufficiently that he decline a nomination. That may be the (God-intended) result for a few, but that is not the intent of the editorial. Rather, it is to encourage the brethren first that, very likely, you have more qualifications than you imagine; and, second, that the Lord who calls you does provide ways to become better qualified.

Again, the importance of properly qualified elders cannot be emphasized enough.

To suppose that the churches need highly qualified *ministers* but not highly qualified elders (or deacons) is unbiblical. It is also thinking that, in the end, will be fatal for the church. But that thinking—that the bar is low for elders’ qualifications—may be fostered by the fact that there is no formal, specialized training for this important office of government in the church.

Among the Reformers it was well-known that the *government* of the church by qualified *elders* was as important as the *instruction* of the church by qualified *pastors*. Which explains why Luther, in 1520, in the same fire in which he publicly burned the papal bull threatening his excommunication, also burned the entire church order of the Roman Catholic Church—

something not commonly known. He was convinced that lasting reform of the church could not be accomplished by simply rejecting false doctrines that were poisoning the church, but also by simultaneous rejection of improper church government. In fact, it was the unbiblical church government that made reform of the Romish false doctrine impossible. Also today, without proper government of the church by qualified elders, the church cannot be or remain true. The church needs qualified elders.

What gives a conscientious elder pause is realizing the gravity of the work. Elders are gatekeepers of Christ's church. They wield the powerful keys of the kingdom—allowing entrance to the penitent believer and putting out the impenitent. They safeguard the crown jewels of the faith. They oversee the life of the flock, even the teaching of the minister. Not infrequently they deal with a rogue member. So the elders must have some hair on their teeth, indeed. But especially they must know how to use the power invested in them by Jesus Christ.

Thus the question: How can elders receive the proper training for their work?

More to the point, the question is: Is *specialized* training necessary? No one would deny that *training* is necessary. Thus, the title of this editorial—*The Necessity of Training Elders*. But the question is whether formal training should be mandated for the elder, just as a formal training is necessary for the would-be minister.

The newly installed elders, especially those who have not served before, maybe ask a different question: Is training *available*? You do not ask whether it is required, but whether there is some way you can get it.

These questions are not new. Shortly after the Reformation, special training was given to elders and prospective elders. In the Netherlands, elder-training existed already in the late seventeenth century, extended for 150 years through the 1834 Secession, and then continued in this branch of the Reformed churches until the era of Herman Bavinck—the early to mid-1900s.

But there were questions, at times, as to its necessity, even its propriety. H. Bouwman, respected church polity expert, opposed formal training for elders. First, he argued, the church must avoid another kind of hierarchy in which the officebearers are *above* the congregation rather than *from* the congregation. Second, if elders are chosen from a group of specially trained men, some of these specially trained men will not be chosen and likely feel slighted. Third, it is likely that the men most qualified—those humble and wise—would not put

themselves forward by enrolling in a class that probably shows they are ambitious. Fourth, the gifts required for this office are not gotten by academic instruction designed especially for elders but by the regular means of grace. Fifth, Bouwman reasoned, a highly trained eldership might tempt Reformed churches to adopt life-long terms, which is not Reformed church polity but Presbyterian.

Bouwman's reasons (seven in all) must be considered carefully, but not as reasons to avoid training of elders. Instead, they are worthy cautions when considering *how* to prepare the men of the church for the office of rule.

What training elders need depends on what qualifications they must have, and what qualifications they must have depends on what work they must do.

Their *work* is to oversee the flock and their fellow officebearers, to supervise doctrine, to care for all the individual sheep, to comfort and teach members at family visitation, to instruct the wayward, to discipline stubborn sinners and receive again the penitent into the fold and, generally, to see to it that everything is done “decently and in order.”

The *qualifications* required for this work are listed most clearly in I Timothy 3 and Titus 1. Primarily, they are spiritual, not intellectual: the elder must be blameless, of good reputation both within and without the church; he is to be watchful, sober, sanctified, hospitable, not new to the church or the faith, not given to drink, not greedy or covetous; and, if married, faithful to his wife and a wise ruler in his home.

One spiritual qualification receives special attention by the Spirit's use of three different words to describe it, all in the negative. An elder must not be a “striker,” a “brawler,” or “soon angry.” Good synonyms for these are: bruiser, quarrelsome, prone to anger. The “servant of the Lord must not strive” (II Tim. 2:24). Faithful elders and ministers do not have a temper, which manifests that they are “selfwilled” (Titus 1:7). “Arrogant” is the sense. Arrogant men are unfit for the office. They imagine that God's work is accomplished by being a bully.

Now, it is apparent that these spiritual qualifications are not acquired in a class or by reading a book. They come from the extended, sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit in a man; often from a solid, Christian upbringing in a stable home; and only through fervent and constant prayer and the regular use of the means of grace.

But one qualification falls into a somewhat different category.

This is the indispensable qualification of knowledge. Knowledge of the truth, of how the church is to be governed, of the process of Christian discipline, of how to oversee the instruction from the pulpit and catechism room, even how to teach truth in various settings. And knowledge *can* be learned in a formal setting, *can* be acquired from books and classes, *can* be gained by a good class that focuses on the work of the elder.

One might miss it on first reading, but I Timothy and Titus include *knowledge* as one of the cardinal qualifications for an elder.

Immediately after Paul teaches Titus of the spiritual qualifications, he adds, as though it were the capstone of them all, “Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he might be able by sound doctrine (instruction) both to exhort and convince the gainsayers.” Gainsayers “teach things which they ought not,” and elders must “stop their mouths.” This takes knowledge of Scripture. Thorough knowledge.

Also, when Paul teaches Timothy that elders and ministers must not strive, the reason he gives is that opponents are corrected not by brawling, but by patient, gentle, meek *instruction*. By instruction, God may grant repentance by working in the sinner to acknowledge the *truth* (II Tim. 2:25, 26). So elders are required to know the truth and even have an aptitude to teach it (I Tim. 3:2; II Tim. 2:24).

These few passages of the New Testament confirm what the entire Scripture teaches: elders need knowledge of both *truth* and *justice*, of doctrine and church government. These are required to judge sermons and catechism lessons, to discern truth from error. By knowledge of Scripture and the confessions they examine whether the faith of new members is indeed the knowledge of “all that God has revealed to us in His Word” (Heidelberg Catechism, Lord’s Day 7) and is “a confession of the Reformed religion” (Church Order, Art. 61). Scripture knowledge is indispensable to supervise the examination of future ministers at synod or classis, and then cast a vote that accords with Scripture and the creeds. It is not impossible that elders even sit as judges in a “heresy trial” of a minister, for which knowledge is required. But rare as a heresy trial at synod may be, elders *daily* are required to know how to “steer the ship” of the local congregation over which God appointed them overseers. They are governors,

judges, kings under Christ, called to “take care of the church of God” (I Tim. 3:5).

What does this all mean for the newly installed elder? This: your training for the office of elder took place when, for years and years, you sat under the ministry of the Word from the pulpit and in the catechism room. By these regular means of grace, you learned the faith of the Scripture. Growing up in a good church with solid catechetical instruction, young men do receive systematic training for being elders. Young men learn the truth of the Reformed faith, which includes the doctrine of church government. And this is why I began by saying “at first glance,” and “the church *seems* to give no formal training” for this work.

This point enables me to repeat my call to every church to include in the “post-Essentials” catechism instruction a careful explanation of the Church Order. If we agree

that every *young person* who confesses his faith must understand “church government and church discipline” in order to promise to “submit” to it, certainly the *elders* who exercise this government and apply the discipline must know it inside and out. The best way to attain this is in the regular means of grace—solid catechism instruction

and good, doctrinal preaching, when you are young.

These few passages of the New Testament confirm what the entire Scripture teaches: elders need knowledge of both truth and justice, of doctrine and church government. These are required to judge sermons and catechism lessons, to discern truth from error.

The churches thank you men whom God called to rule us. May He give you wisdom. May He encourage you that, knowing the Scripture, the confessions, and the Church Order as you do, you have some of the most basic qualifications for your work. May He who called you, also qualify you with all the other graces necessary for your blessed work. And may your qualifications increase as you “diligently search the word of God and continually mediate on the mysteries of faith.” The form for your ordination pressed that duty upon you a few weeks ago.

Questions on Revelation 20

I've been reading your articles on Revelation 20, which are very helpful and seem really accurate. I have a few questions which you may or may not have already addressed.

First, do you suppose the 1,000 is simply for fullness/indefinite duration? Or do you think it could be meant to resonate with or to co-opt the historical scheme based on the creation week? I refer to the Jewish and early Christian view: six days of labor and sin, then the seventh day = 1,000 years of messianic redemption with the cross, ending with the eighth day of eternity?

Also, the ones who reign with Christ in His session were the martyred and, specifically, beheaded ones. Is it reasonable to apply the reign to all people who get to heaven, or should it be seen as a certain class?

It seems they're all priests, so also, I wonder, in what capacity are they priests during this interim?

I've benefited from many of your online articles throughout the years. I always enjoy reading people like you who are in the Dutch tradition. So much has come out of Michigan, serving as a corrective to an all-too-prevalent, vapid Evangelicalism.

Thanks!

Salvatore Ippolito
Albuquerque, New Mexico

Response:

That you read and profit from the articles on the last things, specifically, those on Revelation 20, is an encouragement.

In response to your questions, first, the number 1,000 does indeed represent fullness of time. This is because the number 10 in the Bible is the number of completeness. Think of the 10 plagues as the fullness of judgment upon the nation of Egypt. Think of the 10 commandments as the fullness of God's will for the holy life of His people. One thousand, then, is the fullness of time in which the entire church of Christ is saved and gathered by Christ through the gospel proclaimed by the church. During this period of time, Satan is bound in order that the church might be gathered. Only when this fullness of time with its work of salvation is completed is Satan loosed (by the Lord Christ Jesus) to attack the church in the persecution of the last days.

I am doubtful about a correlation of the meaning of this symbolical number with the thinking of some early Christians concerning the significance of the week.

What did they mean by "1,000 years of messianic redemption"? Keep in mind also that the arrangement of the creation week has been changed by the resurrection of Christ. It is now the day of rest—the Sabbath—first, and the six days of working following.

Your question and observation about the martyrs of Revelation 20 are astute. It would be sound to explain the martyrs as the special class of believers who are actually killed for their witness of Christ. This would be in harmony with the emphatic testimony of Revelation to the reality and privilege of giving up one's life for the sake of faithful confession of Christ Jesus, something that happened during the Roman persecution of the church that is the historical type in Revelation and that will happen at the end in the great tribulation under Antichrist. This explanation would not deny that also all Christians live and reign with Christ at death. It would only emphasize the reward in the case of martyrs.

For myself, I understand the truth of the martyrs to apply to all Christians. Everyone who confesses Christ suffers the loss of some aspect of his earthly life. (In the Greek of the New Testament, the word for "witness" is *martus*, or *martyr*; see Rev. 11). The loss may be reputation. It may be a job. It may be a friend. It may be a husband or a wife or a child. It certainly includes the sacrifice of many things that the believer would otherwise find delightful. In the judgment of God, all such loss, suffering, and sacrifice are martyrdom. Think of Jesus' words in Matthew 19:29: "And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life."

As for the priesthood of believers at death, and during the millennium (Rev. 20:6), believers consecrate themselves to God in fervent praise and lively prayer. And consecration to God is the main aspect of priesthood. Heaven will not be inactivity, but grand work: reigning with Christ as kings and consecrating ourselves and all things in the new world to God.

Prof. David J. Engelsma



A word fitly spoken

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

World

In the New Testament Scriptures, there are several Greek words translated “world.” The most common is “cosmos,” origin of our words cosmic, cosmopolitan, and cosmetics. Its basic meaning is “a complex, unified system or arrangement of harmony, order and beauty.” And this gives rise to secondary meanings like “appropriate, fitting (modesty), fashion, adorn, ornament.” Of all New Testament writers, John uses “cosmos” or “world” the most. And this article focuses on that one word in the gospel of John concerning the world that God so loved, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life (3:16).

The gospel of John is that Jesus, the only-begotten Son of God, perfect image of the Father and loved by Him before the foundation of the world, is sent into the world to save the world (3:17; 4:42; 17:5). He is the Lamb slain to take away the sins of the world (1:29). He is the eternal Prophet and Word born into the world to bear witness to the truth and speak those things He heard from God (6:14; 8:26; 18:20). He is the Bread from heaven that gives life to the world (6:33). He is the true Light that enlightens every man who comes into the world (1:4, 9; 8:12; 9:5).

God sent His beloved, only-begotten Son into the world He so loved, but the world loved Him not; His Son made the world, but the world knew Him not; God’s Word came into the world, but the world received Him not (7:7; 14:16-17). The world neither loves, knows, nor receives the Son because He is from above, the glorified Light of God, sanctified by His Father before the world was; but the world is from beneath, in darkness and blind, loves darkness rather than light, and its deeds are evil (8:23; 10:36; 11:27; 1:10; 3:19; 17:13).

Yet the Son came into the world. He loves the world, yet He prays not for the world (3:16; 17:9). He came not to judge the world, yet for judgment He

did come into the world (3:17; 12:77; 9:39; 12:31). He is the Light of God that makes the blind to see, but the seeing to be blind. He is Light to those who walk in it so they abide not in darkness, but is a stumbling-stone to those who walk in night (9:39; 11:9-10; 12:46). He is the Son of God born to die to draw the world to Himself, but who lives to overcome the world and cast out the prince of this world (12:31-32; 16:33). He is the Truth of God, such that whosoever believes in Him shall have everlasting life from sin and whosoever believes not shall die in sin (8:24). He is the Life of God, so that he who loves his life in this world loses it, but he who hates his life in this world keeps it unto life eternal (12:25).

Jesus came into this world but has departed unto the Father, having loved His own in the world (16:28; 13:1). His own are given to Him by the Father before the world and chosen by Him out of the world (15:9; 17:4-6). They are in the world but, like the Son, are not of this world, are born from above and sent into this world and, therefore, like the Son, are hated by the world (15:19; 17:18). To them, the Son manifests His Father’s name so they know Him (17:25), hear His voice (18:37), keep His word (17:6), are given peace and comfort and have His joy fulfilled in themselves (16:7; 17:13). And in Him they are all one, even as Father and Son are one—the Son in them and Father in the Son—that the world may believe that the Father sent His Son and may know He loves Him (17:21-23). For His own He prays, not that they be taken out of the world but, rather, kept in the world and kept from its evil (17:11-15). For His own He prays, that they may be where He is, to behold the glory given Him as Son loved before the foundation of the world (17:24).

These, and many other things Jesus did, which if every one was written, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen (21:25).



Dordt 400: Memorial stones

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

The Synod of Dordt (6) The expulsion of the Remonstrants

...These stones shall be a memorial unto the children of Israel forever.—Joshua 4:7c

The Synod was growing frustrated with the Remonstrants. The *Acts*¹ helps us understand why: the Remonstrants would not directly answer questions put to them; they tried to divert the discussion to other matters; and they repeatedly referred to the Synod as a conference, viewing themselves as equals with the delegates. They would not submit to the Synod or cooperate with its investigation into their views.

At the momentous 57th session, on January 14, 1619, the matter came to a head: President Johannes Bogerman expelled the Remonstrants from the Synod.



Bogerman's speech

His expulsion speech is not recorded in the official *Acts*, but several eyewitness accounts exist. He told them:

The Synod has treated you with all gentleness, mildness, friendliness, patience, forbearance, and long-suffering, plainly, sincerely, honestly, and kindly; but all the returns made by you have been nothing but base artifices, cheats, and lies.... All your actions have ever been full of tricks, deceits, and equivocations.... [S]ince your obstinacy has been very great and complicated, and has discovered itself even in opposition to the Resolutions of the Synod, and of the supreme Powers, care will be taken to inform all Christendom of it, and you shall find that the Church wants [lacks] no spiritual weapons for punishing you.... I therefore dismiss you in the name of the Lords Commissioners, and of this Synod: Be gone.²

1 https://dordt400.org/category/400_years_ago

2 Gerard Brandt, *The History of the Reformation and other Ecclesiastical Transactions in and about the Low-Countries*

Evaluating this dismissal

From that day to the present, many have rued the dismissal of the Remonstrants and the way in which President Bogerman spoke. I speak in his defense.

First, while broader assemblies are to investigate matters carefully, they may conduct their investigation based entirely on one's writings. That a synod hear the person verbally is not absolutely necessary. Our own classes and synods judge on the basis of *written* appeals, protests, and overtures. Even when an assembly permits the one bringing an issue to address it, that person may not bring any new material or arguments; the assemblies judge on the basis of the written documents. Dordt was not out of line to judge the Remonstrants on the basis of their writings.

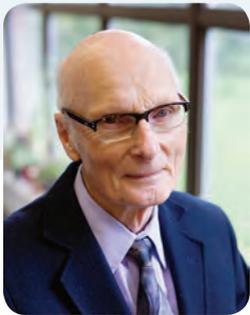
Second, the expulsion of the Remonstrants is regrettable not because of the words Bogerman spoke, but because their own conduct made it necessary. They had been obstructing the progress of the Synod.

Third, President Bogerman was not acting according to his own whim. On December 29 the Synod had come to a consensus that the Remonstrants must be dismissed and judged from their writings if they did not begin soon to cooperate. This consensus grew at the sessions on January 4 and 10, and a final decision to that effect was made on January 11.

Fourth, the States General and some of the foreign delegations had previously recommended that the Remonstrants be dismissed if they did not change their tactics. Bogerman was not speaking his own personal wish; he was indeed speaking "in the name of the Lords Commissioners, and of this Synod."

With the Remonstrants gone, the Synod could make progress in judging the issue at hand.

(London: T. Wood, 1722), 3:151-152.



Search the Scriptures

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

Upon this rock (37) Jerusalem's walls

Previous article in this series: January 1, 2019, p. 156.

The temple of God in Jerusalem, as we saw last time, had at last been rebuilt—some twenty years after the return of the exiles. Jerusalem's walls, however, lay still in ruins, having been thrown down more than a century before by the troops of Nebuchadnezzar. The weakest of the Jews' enemies, therefore, had easy access to the city. They could, if they chose, march right in. That was much to their liking of course, because they hated the Jews. The decree of Cyrus had been a grievous disappointment to them. They did all in their power to prevent the Jews from reestablishing themselves in Palestine. Hence their opposition to the rebuilding of the temple and their delight in the defenseless character of the Jews' capital city.

The Jews in this little colony were no doubt well aware of the implications of those crumbled walls. They wished it were otherwise. But for more than 85 years they were content simply to let those walls lie. They had not been authorized to restore them. But apparently they did not ask either. The task, after all, was daunting. And manpower was limited. So the Jews were willing to content themselves with what the cupbearer of King Artaxerxes saw immediately to be a "reproach" (Neh. 1:3, 17)—that is, a shame, a disgrace.

That was Nehemiah. He was a no-nonsense, take-charge sort of man, and he arrived on the scene about fourteen years after Ezra. Incredibly, he managed to get those walls rebuilt in fifty-two days (Neh. 6:15)! Even the Jews' enemies, who had tried unsuccessfully to impede progress, "perceived that this work was wrought of our God" (Neh. 6:16).

The Jews' enemies were right. It *was* the Lord's work. It was *God* who brought Nehemiah, with all of his administrative skills, from Shushan to Jerusalem. It was *God* who prospered Nehemiah's efforts. But why? Was it because the preservation of God's people depended in any way on walls of stone? Though those walls did serve a good purpose strategically, the truth is that walls of stone, no matter how wide or high, can be scaled or broken down—as they in fact were, a number of times,

in the history of Jerusalem. They therefore *guaranteed* nothing; but in the day of type and shadow the city, and those walls, spoke powerfully to God's people, as they do also now to us, of a spiritual reality. What reality? The *church*, and her 'walls.' The church—founded on the Rock, Christ Jesus, and guarded by Him who never slumbers or sleeps.

To what else could the Lord have been referring in the prophecy, not long before, of Zechariah 2:4, 5? "Jerusalem," said the angel of the Lord, "shall be inhabited as towns without walls for the multitude of men and cattle therein: for I, saith the LORD, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her." Towns without walls. "Open to the whole world," writes Calvin in his commentary on this passage, depending "not on its own strength," but dwelling safely "though exposed on all sides to enemies." "I will be to her a wall of fire," Calvin continues, "for though she will not excel in strongholds and towers, and be without walls and fortresses, and shall be thus exposed to many evils,...my *church* shall be thus preserved, though destitute of all human aids, and without any defense" (emphasis added).

The rebuilding of Zion's walls, therefore, especially because of their typical significance, figured large in the work of Nehemiah in Jerusalem. But he attended also to other matters. He remained, in fact, as governor of Judea for no less than twelve years, after which he returned to Shushan and to the service of King Artaxerxes. But his heart was still in Jerusalem. After "certain days," therefore (Neh. 13:6), Nehemiah asked for permission to go again to Jerusalem. And when he arrived, he learned that abuses that had been addressed earlier both by himself and by Ezra the priest were reasserting themselves.

Nehemiah was grieved, first of all, to find "the house of God forsaken" (Neh. 13:11). The tithes had not been given for the support of the priests, so those whose business it was to serve in the temple had been forced to labor in their fields in order to make a living (13:10). In

addition, Eliashib the high priest had converted one of the storage chambers in the temple court to a splendid apartment in which Tobiah the Ammonite could lodge during his frequent visits to Jerusalem (13:4, 5). Concerning this, Nehemiah writes that “it grieved me sore” (13:8). To think that that wicked Ammonite, who was an enemy of God, was provided lodging in *God’s house!* “I cast forth all the household stuff of Tobiah out of the chamber,” testified Nehemiah, and, after cleansing the chamber, he restored it to its proper use (13:8, 9). And then, to renew the worship of God in the temple, he called the priests back from their fields and reinstated the tithe.

Another abuse that manifested itself during the absence of Nehemiah was that of sabbath desecration. Work was carried on in the fields as on any other day, and all manner of wares were brought into Jerusalem for sale, not only by the Jews, but also by men of Tyre (13:15, 16). Nehemiah issued a stern rebuke to them for “profaning the sabbath” (13:17), and, to make certain that goods intended for sale could no longer enter the city on the sabbath, he shut the gates of the city prior to the beginning of the sabbath till after its close, and stationed his own servants at the gates to enforce the order (13:19). On learning that merchants continued to arrive on the sabbath, lodging outside the walls, he warned them that if they tried that again, he would “lay hands on” them (13:20, 21).

Nehemiah also had to deal with a problem of mixed marriages, which seems to have risen again after the

reformation of Ezra. Nehemiah dealt very harshly with “this great evil” (13:23-27). Among the guilty parties was the grandson of Eliashib the high priest. For marrying the daughter of Sanballat and, apparently, refusing to put her away, Nehemiah expelled him from Judah (13:28).

That’s the last we read of this strong leader whom God had prepared for His people as they reestablished a Jewish community in the land of Palestine. All that remains of Old Testament history, therefore, is what we read in the book of Malachi, the last of the prophets of Old Testament times. Malachi’s prophecy is believed to have been uttered sometime either during, or shortly after, the days of Nehemiah. The prophet had words of warning concerning, among other things, the selfishness and hypocrisy that marked their worship (Mal. 1:6-14)—hypocrisy that would eventually become the formalism that characterized the Jewish state at the time of Christ. Words of warning there were, for a backsliding nation.

And words of comfort, too, for the people of God—comfort grounded in the covenant faithfulness of God. “I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed” (Mal. 3:6). “Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts” (Mal. 3:1).

Next time: The intertestamentary period.



All Thy works shall praise Thee

Dr. Brendan Looyenga, Professor of Chemistry and Biochemistry at Calvin College and member of Zion Protestant Reformed Church in Hudsonville, Michigan

Fighting ourselves

“For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.”

Galatians 5:14-15

In the last article of this brief, two-part series, (December 15, 2018, p. 139) we considered the immune system with which God has equipped our bodies to fight infection. This marvelous component of our bodies is designed as a means to protect us from the host of microbes—

viruses, bacteria and other microscopic organisms—that populate our world. These microbes play important roles in the creation when in their appropriate niches, but can wreak havoc on our bodies when they manage to penetrate the physical barriers (skin and mucous membranes) that separate our “insides” from the external world. The various cells of the immune system, as well as the systems of communication that direct them to areas of infection, form an intricate network of defense that is required to maintain the health of the body.

At the same time, our bodies must contend with the fact that they contain an armed force that is constantly seeking an enemy to destroy. This force of microscopic cells is armed to the teeth with a host of chemical weapons that it can use to neutralize, engulf, digest, or poison foreign invaders. Like the chemical weapons of modern warfare, those used by the immune system can be indiscriminate in their destructive power. If unleashed at the wrong time or place—or aimed at the wrong target—they can cause incredible damage to our bodies just as well as to invaders from the microbial world. Without proper control, our immune system is a powerful army primed for destruction of any target that crosses its path.

This biological power comes at a cost, as defects in the immune system underlie an incredible range of human diseases. Some of these diseases emerge from deficiency in the immune system, such as AIDS, while others are the result of immunological hyperactivity. We call this latter class “autoimmune” diseases, because they represent a literal attack of the body upon itself. Autoimmune diseases include a number of relatively common conditions, including type I diabetes, multiple sclerosis, rheumatoid arthritis, and lupus. While the precise causes and symptoms of these diseases vary widely, each has its origin in an immune system that is improperly turning its focus on an internal target rather than an invading pathogen.

It would be helpful if scientists and physicians could explain precisely how autoimmune diseases arise, but the reality is that little is known about the early stages of their development. Like many diseases, there is certainly a genetic component that makes some individuals more susceptible than others to getting an autoimmune disease. But most of the patients who develop an autoimmune disease do so for no obvious reason, both before and after the condition is diagnosed. One common feature that we do know about, however, is that autoimmune diseases can arise after specific types of infection. This has led some scientists to suggest that viral infections can serve as a sort of trigger for autoimmune disease.

The basic premise behind this suggestion is a case of mistaken identity. Recall that cells of the *adaptive* immune system actually *learn* what to attack based on the molecular pieces and parts of microbes that are randomly presented to them by cells of the *innate* immune system. Because all biological organisms are made up of the same basic materials (proteins, carbohydrates, and lipids), there are some chemical similarities between the molecules that make up a virus and those that make up a person. Suppose the piece of virus that is used to

“educate” adaptive immune cells is chemically similar to a component of the nervous system. This might activate the immune cells correctly to hunt down the virus throughout the body, including in tissues of the brain or spinal cord. Once at those sites, however, the immune cells might fail to discriminate between viral particles and nerve cells, thus leading to their indiscriminate destruction in addition to pathogenic viruses. This mechanism has been suggested to account for some cases of multiple sclerosis, which results from the improper destruction of cells in the brain and spinal cord by the immune system.

Let me be absolutely clear that this scenario is not a universal explanation for every autoimmune disease. We cannot say unequivocally that all of these conditions arise because of a basic similarity between pathogens and human-derived molecules. What we can say, however, is that all autoimmune diseases represent an uncontrolled form of inflammation in which human immune cells are improperly attacking otherwise healthy tissues because they are inappropriately targeting a human target rather than a true pathogen. In all cases, one component of the body (immune cells) is attacking another part of the body rather than a true enemy to its health. It is mistaken self-destruction.

We can use this understanding of autoimmune disease to build upon the analogy connected to our immune systems that we treated in the first article of this series. In that article we compared the work of the immune system to that of the church in its work of maintaining spiritual health and purity. The unifying principle was that the church properly excises false doctrine and unbiblical practices through a series of steps that closely mirror the processes used by our immune systems. As stated in the first article, this is necessary for maintenance of a healthy church and it is fundamentally biblical.

But there is more to be said because, if there is danger in the power of the immune system, so too is there danger when a church responds to the “infection” of false doctrine or practice. Think of that danger as a sort of inflammation that engulfs the church amidst a very real controversy of doctrine. It may well be that the initial trigger is a very real and dangerous teaching or practice that *must* be dealt with by many ecclesiastical bodies over a significant period of time. And it might take a lot of time for the problem to be resolved. Such work is necessary and it is biblical but, when the response of the body is inappropriately targeted, it comes at a grave cost.

In this context I wish to point out three related ways in which an initially proper church controversy can burn out of control in such a way that it causes wrongful, indiscriminate damage to the body of Christ.

The first of these is an elevated sensitivity—call it a *hyper-vigilance*—to differences of position that inevitably arise within a church controversy. This sort of hypersensitivity to differences goes far beyond the *content* of distinct positions and begins to impinge upon the *motives* and *intents* of those involved. The festering discontent that this attitude stirs up usually results in an incessant attack upon the officebearers who have been tasked by God to resolve the

controversy. No decision is good enough, or precise enough, or sufficiently broad, or stated correctly, or of the right tone to please the hyper-vigilant critic. Reputations are called into question, and men are condemned as being ineffective or unorthodox in their work. Yes, it is true that these men are weak means that God has chosen to use

for His purpose, and that men can make mistakes. But when the suspicions about motives or intent begin to creep into the environment of doctrinal controversy, the inflammation of doubt and disrespect for office far too often results in damage to the church—by the church.

In this kind of inflammatory environment, a second problem easily emerges. This problem is that *perceived threats* to personal preference become elevated to the level of *attacks* upon doctrinal principle. Rather than rightly understanding that issues of preference should be handled by the wise counsel of consistories who know their local congregations, members of the church begin to inflate their *preferences* into matters that end up at the classical or denominational level. Such work inevitably distracts from the real problem at hand and dilutes the work of ecclesiastical bodies. Under such circumstances it is unclear to many in the pews what the real problem is—or was—and the inevitable result is confusion.

Amidst this confusion, the third problem—a spirit of schism—reigns unchecked. Arguments begin to stray from an articulation of clear doctrinal principle into denigration of the other “camp.” Brother is pitted against brother, and both parties bite and devour each other with vicious words. At some point the initial issue becomes entirely obscured by the person-

alities, and nothing is left to defend except the side one is on. Attacks go on and on in a relentless circle of chronic damage to the church.

The eventual result of chronic autoimmune diseases—if left untreated—is a corrosion to the integrity of the body. Constant immune attacks on various organs or tissues of the body eventually weaken its ability to carry out its natural functions or even to resist real threats of infection. The body weakens, and then dies.

The result of “autoimmune” disease in the church is corrosion of its unity, its fellowship, its ecclesiastical structures, and the sacraments. In its wake is the

spiritual loss or defection of members—especially young people. Those on the attack may still see this as the process of purification, perhaps even an opportunity to off-load the “unspiritual” element of the church. But in reality, this isn’t purification—it’s putrefaction. The body of Christ is not purified—it is corroded to death. And Satan laughs.

Any otherwise faithful church or denomination can fall prey to the violence of wrongly targeted internal strife. This is not a new problem, as evidenced by the fact that both Paul and James had to warn saints in the early church to put away the spirit of division and strife caused by their self-serving interests or theological preferences (I Cor. 1:10-17). The danger was real then—it remains so today.

But this is not the end of the story, for there is grace from God to resist the spirit of strife and division. This grace is manifested in two words. Paul gave us the first one in the opening verses above: *love*. James gives us the other in the closing verses below: *humility*. We pray that all God’s people learn more and more to know the grace, peace and unity that He gives us with these two words.

But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you, James 4:6-8.

Yes, it is true that these men are weak means that God has chosen to use for His purpose, and that men can make mistakes. But when the suspicions about motives or intent begin to creep into the environment of doctrinal controversy, the inflammation of doubt and disrespect for office far too often results in damage to the church—by the church.



Strength of youth

Rev. Ryan Barnhill, pastor of the Peace Protestant Reformed Church in Lansing, Illinois

Pornography

Everywhere you turn, she is there. In your grandparents' day, finding her took some effort, but not anymore. She prominently displays herself on roadside billboards. Boldly, she hides in millions of websites, her lips dropping as a honeycomb, and her mouth smoother than oil. She loves to talk on the commercials and in the songs, and her message is as unmistakable as it is wicked: "Lie with me." Distressing about this woman is that she makes an appearance, whether she is asked to or not, catching many—also children and young people—unaware. Even the world has become alarmed at her prevalence and how often she is viewed by men, women, young people, and even children—the statistics, across the board, are staggering. She is a part of a multi-billion-dollar industry.

She is the strange woman. Read about her in Proverbs. Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death.

This woman, along with so much other sexual uncleanness accursed of God, is portrayed in written form, in still and moving pictures, and even in virtual reality. This is pornography.

We may not avoid this subject, even though we cringe at the thought of it. We may not shrink from it, for the Bible obviously does not avoid addressing sexual sin pointedly and frankly. Instruction and warnings in this area are necessary because we live in a sexually-depraved world; an unspeakably wicked culture surrounds us every day. Furthermore, the necessity of such instruction and warning is due to the sinful nature each of us yet has. Look no further than David, a true believer who was seduced by and complied with the lusts of the flesh. *Christians* are ensnared in pornography. *Reformed* Christians find themselves in its grip. Father and mother, do not think for a moment that your children are immune to this. *Do not think that for a moment.* Young person, do not deceive yourself that *you* would never look these things up. Remember Proverbs 7:26: "For she hath cast down many wounded: yea, many strong men have been slain by her." That is sobering.

Young people, *you* are in the crosshairs of Satan and the world. Satan and the world know how your

hormones rage. Satan and the world know how impressionable you are. Satan and the world know how curious you can be. According to the literature, even pre-teens are exposed to pornography. No wonder we read of a father giving instruction to his *son* (Prov. 5:1); the wise father understands that his son is bombarded in this wicked world!

There are, of course, many mediums through which this attack is waged. We should be warned about them. Let us limit ourselves to three.

First, this uncleanness is readily accessed on the smartphone. The phone, making life easier in so many respects, also provides the means for accessing so much filth: pornography accessed in less than five seconds on a device small enough to be taken anywhere! Second, movies certainly should not escape our attention. Have we, Protestant Reformed young people, lost the battle against movies? Do we piously shun the movie theater, but then bring the movie theater into our living room? Among the multitude of other reasons to reject movies and renew our fight against them, here is one: the vast majority of them are filthy, and the holy God abhors such unholiness. Third, pornographic material is found in the storyline of books. Explicitly sexual content is intertwined with romance to make for material appealing to girls and women. This reminds us of an important point: not only can men be enslaved to pornography, but *women* can be too. The reality is that also *young ladies and women*, young ladies and women *in the church*, are not immune to the allurements of pornography, although it might take a different form for them.

Pornography is enslaving. What the world calls "addiction," Scripture identifies as enslavement or bondage. Pornography binds young people like a chain. Consider the following example. The thirteen-year-old adolescent began looking at inappropriate images out of curiosity. Once he started, it became harder and harder to stop. At age eighteen, he was not only looking at these images, but he was *enslaved* in a way he could have never imagined. Then he began dating. He said not a word to his girlfriend about the pornography, for fear she would break up with him. Soon, they were engaged.

On the day of the wedding, he silently promised himself that he would never look it up again. Six months into the marriage, the burning lust returned with a vengeance. He tried to hide it from his wife, but he could not. She was devastated. This is not an uncommon story—in the church. Pornography leaves behind a trail of brokenness and anguish, both among the unmarried and the married. Pornography is enslaving.

Pornography is sin. The viewing of the strange woman and other such uncleanness is a violation of the seventh commandment of God's law. Chaste Joseph understood well that to lie with Potiphar's wife would be great wickedness and sin against his God (Gen. 39:9). David called his adultery what it was—sin: "I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin" (Ps. 32:5). Increasingly, there is found in the church world a numbness toward this sin. The lines are blurred to such a degree that some hardly recognize it as sin anymore. The reasoning is as follows: "An electronic relationship is not nearly as harmful as flesh and blood fornication"; "What's so evil about an occasional Internet search—I can't help my raging hormones"; "A little indulgence now and again isn't so bad, and it's almost expected for people my age in their teens or early twenties...once marriage comes around, things will be different."

Beloved young people, pornography is sin. God detests it. No *impenitent* adulterer or fornicator shall inherit the kingdom of God (I Cor. 6:9, 10).

Perhaps as you read this article you say, "That's me. I am enslaved." If so, in sorrow of heart, in *brokenness*, confess your sin to the Lord. God, by His Word and Spirit, certainly renews His people to repentance and a true sorrow over sin.

There is much shame connected to sexual sin, also the viewing of pornography. Shame is the suffering and pain of soul associated with guilt and disgrace. But do not despair. You must know something very beautiful about Jesus' suffering: it was the suffering of *shame*. The shame that Jesus knew was not the kind associated with *personal* guilt, of course; the shame Jesus knew was the shame associated with the sin of His people imputed to Him. When the crown of thorns was planted on His head, it was the suffering of shame; when He was spit on and buffeted, it was the suffering of shame; when He was stripped of His clothes and hung on the cross, and laughed at and mocked by those passing by, it was the suffering of shame. That is good news. This is the shame *we* deserve to bear everlastingly. But Jesus has delivered us from that. Jesus suffered all this, that

we might be *clothed* in His perfect righteousness. That is the gospel. Marvelous, is it not?

Whether or not you are in the grip of pornography, there is a calling for you. Flee! Joseph fled from Potiphar's wife. I Corinthians 6:18 says, "Flee fornication..." God's wisdom is, "Remove thy way far from her, and come not nigh the door of her house" (Prov. 5:8). If someone assaults you with their mouth (violation of the sixth commandment), you might consider taking some time to talk to them about loving the neighbor. But sexual sin is different: if you are faced with sexual temptation, do not linger, explain, or reason—just *run!* From every appearance of Potiphar's wife in print or on screen, flee! Come not nigh the door of the strange woman, wherever her door may be found in our digital age!

There is another calling: seek help and accountability. The communion of saints is a beautiful truth! If you struggle with pornography, seek help from your pastor, a trusted elder, a teacher, or a mature friend. But even if you are not entrapped right now, seek out a person you trust to keep you accountable in this world awash with temptation. You are not alone, dear reader; you fight side by side with other soldiers in the church militant!

Do not minimize the power of God's grace. What a power, that grace of God in Jesus Christ! His grace is stronger than that enslaving sin of pornography. His grace breaks that heavy chain. God gives grace truly to hate this sin and to flee from it. Do not despair! The last part of Lord's Day 44 (Heidelberg Catechism) applies here: "...that we constantly endeavor, and pray to God for the grace of the Holy Spirit, that we may become more and more conformable to the image of God..." This is your life of thankfulness for so great a salvation in Christ Jesus.

I would be remiss if I did not address parents. Parents, may your home environment be such that sex is properly and regularly discussed as soon as you discern your children are ready for it. Warn again and again of the dangers of pornography—do so as a part of your regular devotional life in the home. Fathers, be an example of purity before your children in your own behavior, public and private. Be sure that you are knowledgeable of the latest technology, and that you have set safeguards in your home to prevent the viewing of pornography. Allowing young people unlimited and unmonitored access to digital technology is folly. God give you much wisdom. Do not despair, parents: although you raise children in an evil world and the task is difficult, your comfort is that God is sovereign.

There is no better concluding word on this subject than I Corinthians 6:19, 20: "What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in

you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."

In future articles, we will look more broadly at our call-

ing according to the seventh commandment, and that from a *positive* point of view—our calling in the areas of singleness and marriage.



Go ye into all the world

Rev. Daniel Holstege, missionary of the Protestant Reformed Churches in America, stationed in Manila, Philippines

What have you done with God? The question of elenctics

Elenctics, an aspect of the mission and witness of the church of Jesus Christ in the world, asks a vital question. "In all elenctics," wrote the Dutch Reformed missiologist J. H. Bavinck, "the concern is always with the all-important question: 'What have you done with God?'"¹

You, man of this world, have done something with God. What have you done with Him?

The answer to that question of elenctics points us to one of the important elements of our task in missions and witnessing.

In missions and witnessing, there is an encounter between the believer and the unbeliever somewhere in the midst of the world. We are not of the world yet we live in the world, and therefore we encounter the unbeliever. We meet him in the towns and suburbs of America. We meet him on the airplane as we fly to China for business. We meet him at the construction site. We meet him at the office. We meet him in the university classroom. Sometimes the man whom we encounter claims to be a Christian. But sometimes he makes known that he is an unbeliever. He speaks of his Buddhist or Hindu faith. He talks about going to the synagogue or mosque for worship. He tells you frankly that he does not believe in God, or that he does not know if there is a God. Maybe it becomes clear that he worships the gods of the stadium or theater or casino. To cope with the struggles of life, he turns to the bottle to dull the pain or to the Internet for sexual gratification. He puts all the hope of his soul in the doctor and in modern medical technology to save him from his sickness.

But one thing we always know is that he has done something with God. When we encounter the unbeliev-

er, we know that we are never facing an empty vessel just waiting to be filled with the treasures of the gospel. We are facing a man who knows something about God and has done something with God. Everyone in the world knows something about God. For according to the apostle Paul, God reveals the invisible things of Himself clearly through the creation of the world so that man understands something about Him through the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead (Rom. 1:20). Everyone also has a conscience that bears witness, and thoughts that accuse or excuse one another, for the work of the law of God is written on his heart (2:15). Indeed, every man after the Fall has "the glimmerings of natural light, whereby he retains some knowledge of God...and of the differences between good and evil..." (Canons, III/IV, 4).

Therefore, when we encounter a man of the world, we already know that he has been doing something with regard to God. What have you done with God, O man of this world? What have you done with Him whose wondrous work you see in the heavens that declare the glory of God and the firmament that shows His handiwork? What have you done with Him who lays the beams of His chambers in the waters, who makes the clouds His chariot, who walks upon the wings of the wind, who laid the foundations of the earth that it should never be moved? What have you done with Him who sits upon the circle of the earth, who stretched out the star-speckled heavens as a curtain and a tent in which to dwell? What have you done with Him who has not left Himself without witness, but has given us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness?

We know, too, that any man or woman whom we encounter has done something with the work of the law that God has written on the heart. What have you

¹ Johan H. Bavinck, *Introduction to the Science of Missions* (Nutley, New Jersey: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 1977), 223.

done, man of the world, with the testimony of the law in your heart that you ought to worship the one true God alone and not invent your own gods? What have you done with your conscience that bears witness in your soul that you must not kill or steal or commit adultery? Have you, like Adam and Eve, sewed together the fig leaves of false religion and vain works and tried to cover your nakedness? Have you tried to hide from God by accusing others and making excuses for your actions? What have you done with God, O man?

Elenctics is an aspect of the mission and witness of the church to that man of the world who has done something with God.

Elenctics presupposes what Paul teaches in Romans 1:18-32, that the man of the world is not waiting and longing to be filled with the riches of salvation in Christ alone, of which we are the witnesses. But the man of the world is ungodly and holds the truth in unrighteousness. What has he done with God? He has done the very same thing I would do and the very same thing I do by nature. He has suppressed the knowledge of God deep in his heart. He has pushed it down because he does not want it. He has even tried to deny that it is there at all. He knows God, but he does not glorify Him as God, neither is he thankful. But he has become vain in his imagination and his foolish heart is darkened. He professes himself to be wise with his religion and philosophy, but he has become a fool. He has changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, birds, beasts, and creeping things that he sees in the creation around him. He has changed the truth of God into a lie and worshiped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever.

The man of the world is certainly not seeking the pearl of great price, but is lost in the darkness of his sin and depravity. He is not hungering and thirsting after righteousness, but looking for a way to enjoy his sin and escape the punishment. The spark of natural light that he still possesses is not a grace of God common to all men, by the good use of which he can gain a greater, namely, evangelical or saving grace and salvation itself (Canons, III/IV, B, 5). For “so far is this light of nature from being sufficient to bring him to a saving knowledge of God and to true conversion, that he is incapable of using it aright even in things natural and civil” (III/IV, 4).

Therefore, the man of the world has invented countless false religions in his quest for happiness and security apart from the one true God. There is the Buddhist religion of millions in China and Southeast Asia. There are the masses of Hinduism on the Indian subcontinent and Shintoism in the islands of Japan. In the Middle

East, North Africa, and Indonesia you find hordes following the crescent of Islam. Farther south in Africa, there are the traditional animistic religions of that continent. Moreover, the believer will encounter all of these and others anywhere in the world, including America and Europe.

But there are millions of others in the world who consider themselves to be within the fold of Christianity. The believer will encounter Roman Catholics in the world, especially here in the Philippines. I encounter a Roman Catholic every time I pay the rent for our house. Our landlady, who lives next door, is a devout Roman Catholic. Last time I talked to her (she is an old widow woman), she told me that she prays the rosary every night. She said that we Protestants do not love Mary, but she prays to Momma Mary, because Mary will convince her son Jesus to hear her prayers, and Jesus will persuade God. We encountered a throng of Roman Catholics in one of the famous churches here in Manila a few months ago. We saw a multitude of people crowded into that building eagerly pressing near to the priest who was tossing holy water on them. We saw a man with a terrible infirmity on his face sitting in the cathedral, presumably hoping for a miracle. We saw many people touching and praying to images of Jesus and Mary. What are they all doing with God?! They know something about God. They know more than most because of the vestiges of the truth, like the deity of Christ, still taught by Rome. But what are they doing with God? They are changing the glory of the incorruptible God into an image and worshiping that image.

Then there are the growing numbers in America and Europe who say that there is no God, or that they cannot be sure. They say matter has always existed. They say the universe is billions of years old. They say it began by a “big bang” and evolved over billions of years to its present state. They say life just began by itself. They say man is god. We must put our trust in man to save us from all our troubles. We may determine for ourselves what is right and wrong. We may each choose for ourselves how we want to seek happiness in this life. We must not condemn homosexuality or transgenderism as sin, but must affirm and celebrate all lifestyles. What are they doing with God? They are holding the truth in unrighteousness, for they know that there is a God, but they do not want to believe in Him or obey Him. Therefore, God is giving them up unto vile affections, for their women change the natural use into that which is against nature, and the men leave the natural use of the women and burn in their lust one toward another (Rom. 1:26-27).

Such is the man of the world we encounter on the

mission field and in our day-to-day life. That encounter must become, at some point and in some way, a confrontation. There is a clash between the believer and the unbeliever, the man who belongs to Christ and the man who is still under the dominion of Satan, the man of the church and the man of the world. That confrontation, that clash, is the task of elenctics.

“Elenctics,” according to Bavinck, “is strongly controlled by the missionary motive.... The missionary motive permeates and motivates elenctics...”² That missionary motive is that the heathen elect might be converted and gathered into the church, for the glory of God.

He who engages in elenctics acknowledges that the world is the stronghold of Satan and the enemy of the church from which he must keep himself unspotted. But

2 Introduction, 232.

he also knows that the world is the field where the seed of the gospel must be cast (Matt. 13:38). The world is a great sea, with many kinds of fish, into which the net of the Word of God must be thrown for the gathering of the elect in all nations (Matt. 13:47).

He knows that God is giving over the ungodly to their vile affections. But he also knows that God will save some of them, as He did through the apostle Paul. For Paul wrote to the Corinthians that homosexuals will not inherit the kingdom of God, “And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God” (I Cor. 6:9-11).

With that knowledge and missionary motive, the believer engages in elenctics, one of the essential elements of all true missions and witnessing.

And what exactly is elenctics? We will return to that next time.



Reformed Free Publishing Association Annual meeting

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

The RFPA, the CPRC, and the spread of the truth (3)

Previous article in this series: January 1, 2019, p. 165

Translators

In addition to those already referred to, let me tell you a little about some of our other translators so that you can appreciate why we believe them to be trustworthy. Let me begin with some of our European helpers.

- A Danish pastor who had to leave the state Lutheran church because of the truth. He greatly loves RFPA material.
- A blogger in northern France who is seeking to counteract heresies concerning justification from the New Perspective on Paul and John Piper circles.
- A Hungarian doctor of law whose many translations include a number on God's uncommon grace.
- A brother in extremely secular Sweden who translated articles on the family and the church.
- A minister in the Czech Republic, who used to be a liberal and who hated the Reformed faith. However, his job required him to work with Scripture and, by

irresistible grace, he came to see that Reformed teaching faithfully explains God's Word. He ordered Herman Hoeksema's *Reformed Dogmatics* and has sent us a dozen translations in Czech.

- A saint in Malta who emailed to us six of our ecumenical and Reformed creeds in Maltese.
- A Ukrainian lady in England who was struggling at the time with thyroid cancer. She translated over a dozen pieces, including several on faith and Prof. Robert Decker's pamphlet, "God's Sovereign Love, Our Comfort."
- A brother who works for the German civil government. According to his contract, if he has completed all the work that is laid on his desk, he is free to do whatever he chooses. So he can, while being paid by the German state, translate Protestant Reformed material for our website. This is wonderful!
- A Russian couple in Belgium who are part way through translating *Be Ye Holy* by Profs. D. Engelsma

and H. Hanko into their mother tongue to counteract false views of sanctification and help God's people.

- A Slovenian history teacher whose translations include "God So Loved the World..." by Prof. H. C. Hoeksema.
- A brother on the Mediterranean island of Sardinia who has translated material on sovereign grace, Pentecostalism, and other subjects into Italian.
- A PhD student in the Republic of Ireland, who is learning the Reformed faith in the Limerick Reformed Fellowship (LRF), has rendered materials into her native Albanian and Greek, including Rev. Carl Haak's pamphlet "Our Only Comfort," which is available online in both languages.
- Three of our translators moved from continental Europe to Northern Ireland to join the CPRC. Sadly, one of them left the Reformed faith for house-churchism. Another married a young man in the LRF and so lives in the Republic of Ireland. One is marrying a young woman in the PRC and moving to America.

Here are some of the saints from the continent of Africa who have provided us with translations.

- An elder from South Africa has translated scores of "Covenant Reformed News" articles into Afrikaans because they are both short and meaty.
- A brother in Malawi translated a piece against homosexuality for his own people, as a preservative from the filth promoted from our sick Western world.
- A South African Reformed website worker has started sending me electronic versions of our "Three Forms of Unity" in several African languages.
- However, there is also the sad story of a lady from South Africa, in need of much personal comfort in the midst of her many struggles. She was over half way through translating Rev. Gerrit Vos' book, *O Taste and See* into Afrikaans. I asked her several times to send me the chapters she had already translated. But she insisted that she would email it all to me when she was completely finished. Then she did not respond to my emails or even the letter that I posted to her. I do not know if the lady died or if the cares of this world finally dragged her down, and I have no other avenues for contacting her.

Here are a few of our Spanish translators:

- A brother in Texas, who loves the unconditional covenant of friendship, especially likes to translate material on this subject.
- A theological student from Chile translated articles on key doctrines into Spanish and was used by God to convert his Brazilian theological professor to sovereign,

particular grace and a rejection of common grace. He is now back in his homeland as a pastor.

- A mother from the Canadian province of Québec whose translations include Prof. H. Hanko's pamphlet, "The Building of a Home."
- Doner Bartolon, a member of First PRC (Grand Rapids, MI) and a pre-seminary student, has translated fifteen of Rev. Rodney Kleyn's Reformed Witness Hour sermons on eschatology and also made them into YouTube videos, in order to strengthen saints in his native Mexico and other Hisanophones or Spanish speakers.

Now let us consider a few of our other helpers.

- Two Indonesian saints who sit side by side at their desks doing IT work. They have translated over 130 pieces, including articles on alcohol because this is an issue in their Islamic land, since Muslims believe that alcohol is per se sinful. After one of the men married, he read Protestant Reformed material on marriage and translated some of it into Indonesian. When he and his wife had their first child, he translated articles on child-rearing, including Rev. Allen Brummel's pamphlet, "Bringing Forth Children in an Age of Selfishness."
- A couple from Michigan put us in contact with their friends in SE Asia, who sent us a number of translations, including the Heidelberg Catechism in Nepali.
- A Brazilian brother, who migrated (legally) to Australia, translated some articles into Portuguese as a parting gift to his brethren in the land he left behind.
- A French-speaking lady from Quebec, who loves the truth of sovereign grace, translated all of the chapters of *The Five Points of Calvinism* (1976), written by Profs. H. Hanko, H.C. Hoeksema, and Rev. G. VanBaren.
- A brother from India is translating Protestant Reformed literature into Hindi. He has already finished pamphlets by Rev. S. Houck ("Knowing the True God") and Prof. D. Engelsma ("Try the Spirits: A Reformed Look at Pentecostalism").

Many others have helped us, are still helping us, or are about to help us by sending us translations of our creeds or of Protestant Reformed materials. However, space forbids mentioning many of them here.

Portuguese is probably the language in which we have had the most translators. These are the words of one of them, Thiago McHertt, Brazilian pastor and director of Veritas Biblioteca Reformada:

I can still remember the first time that I accessed the CPRC website and saw that we were not the only ones willing to make good theology available in other languages. We had just started a translation project in order to make sound theology available in Portuguese

and we came across www.cprc.co.uk. Since then we have translated more than 1,000 pages of RFPAs materials, from entire books, especially *Portraits of Faithful Saints*, to chapters and articles. We are not the only ones to have been blessed by these materials, for our church also benefits directly from our work, as do many others who have the opportunity to learn Reformed theology in their own tongue. Many thanks to God for using the RFPAs and the CPRC to make that possible. As in God's providence, the printing press was fundamental to the spread of the Protestant Reformation, now the Internet is the great medium by which people all around the globe can come to know the truth.

Remember the "default position," the standard setting, as it were, for the typical professing evangelical: "A" for Arminian, "B" for baptistic, "C" for charismatic, "D" for dispensationalist, with low views of the four "C"s (church, creeds, covenant, and catechism), as well as sub-biblical ideas regarding marriage and worship? Well, that is the situation in most of the English-speaking world. It is even worse in most other languages. Clearly, there is an urgent need in other lands too for English Reformed materials for those who can read it and for translations to help those who cannot.

Conclusion

I could say a lot more about the value of and need for RFPAs and Protestant Reformed literature. My wife Mary copied and pasted some sixteen pages of excellent quotes from saints all around the world, in case they could be included in my speech or this article. But I ran out of time and space, and so, sadly, I was not able to use any of them.

Mary typed up another four pages consisting of an interview I had with a licentiate minister from Hungary, who is one of our translators. He explained in great detail how RFPAs materials are of immense help to him. I must also forego quoting his encouraging words.

There is especially one question that is asked by those brought to the knowledge of the Reformed faith through our witness that I will pass on: "Why did the Lord wait so long before bringing me into this rich knowledge of the truth? I have wasted so much time and so much space on my bookshelves with rubbish when I could have been reading something of this quality!" Some of them have also said, "I used to be caught up in Arminianism and Pentecostalism. Now I've lost all my children!" Hosea 4:6 speaks of this awful situation: "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge...I will... forget thy children."

I would like to add a word of appreciation regarding the RFPAs service. We have always found the staff to be very helpful, swift to fulfill orders, and friendly. This applies to Tim Pipe and Evelyn Langerak, who recently retired, as well as the current RFPAs staff of Alex Kalsbeek, Paula Kamps, and Miriam Koerner.

Finally, what would the CPRC like to say to the RFPAs with regard to its future work? We would say that we are not at all upset if the RFPAs publishes an extra book or two in a year. That is fine by us. What would trouble us and our translators, however, is if you started to print bland, broadly Evangelical material. Christian book stores and the Internet are already full of such stuff. Instead, keep on publishing rich, comforting, distinctive, Reformed doctrine. Continue sending forth God's pure, biblical, confessional and health-giving truth!



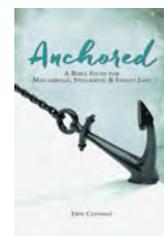
Bring the books...

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

Anchored: A Bible Study for Miscarriage, Stillbirth and Infant Loss, Erin Cushman (WestBow Press, rev. 2015). 182pp. \$13.95 (paper). [Reviewed by Brenda Hoekstra, member of Hudsonville PRC.]

This is a book review of a new and 'better' book on parental bereavement than one I did before.

As the title informs, the book is a Bible study. It is a very Reformed Bible study.



The statistic states that one in four pregnancies ends in devastating loss. This means that there are many more mothers, fathers, and whole families experiencing grief than most of us realize. A Bible study designed to help in such an event is fitting.

This book is not full of trite platitudes or a list of steps to take in order to handle grief. It is not generic, watered down, or designed for all religions. I think it could be given to a new Christian and would cause their faith and understanding to grow. Even the introduction states that it is fitting for someone who has never picked up a Bible before as well as someone well versed in it. Although it is fitting for the newest or weakest believer, it is not so simplistic as to be too shallow or 'light' for the more mature believer. It is clear and probing. The book works through the questions that one suffering these losses asks, and gives encouragement, hope, and wisdom. As the back cover states, *Anchored* invites you to grieve in an honest and faith-filled way. The book includes personal stories, which will definitely help you realize that you are not alone in your grief. These stories get you outside of yourself and are encouraging as each testifies of God's work, goodness, and help, telling of one's own spiritual growth.

Seasoned insight and gentle questions help the reader apply scriptural truths to their own personal situation. The book provides space for readers to write down their

reflections and journal what they learn. Each chapter presents truth, includes the fully quoted text it considers, and has simple yet guiding questions to help the reader understand that truth especially in regards to the matter of grief. The book begins with our understanding of God and His Word, heaven and hope, and then moves into further, more personal ideas like trust, envy, and relationships that are impacted by the grief. The Scripture quoted was not our beloved KJV but I was comfortable with the ESV version that was used; there were a few marked as NIV as well. I appreciated the appendix that explained the difference between babies who have gone from this earth to life eternal. The endnotes included the titles of additional books that would be helpful. I did not find any doctrinal errors or practical application errors.

Unlike the books both titled *Empty Arms*, this book sticks closely to Scripture. It was not a personal journey through grief and was not the author's personal application of Scripture to her own grief or the grief of the reader.

Although this book is written for those who experience miscarriage, stillbirth, and early infant loss, I think that it would benefit those who have experienced the loss of a child at any age. Some have even found it helpful in their struggle with the loss of a child to a life of sin or abandonment of faith.



News from our churches

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

Trivia question

Of the 33 Protestant Reformed Churches in North America, what time do most hold their morning worship service? Answer later in this column.

Young people's activities

There was a Young People's Christmas Bazaar recently in Loveland, CO where the congregation gathered

together for an annual dinner and silent auction. Soups, salads, hot cocoa, and cinnamon rolls were available, the fellowship was fine, and proceeds benefitted the young people attending the Western Retreat and the annual Convention. Attendees were invited to don their best (or worst) Christmas attire and enjoy the evening. We are sure many did just that!

The Zion PRC Young People's Culver's restaurant fundraising event was held Monday, December 17 at the Jenison location. The young people helped serve throughout the dinner hour. All tips/donations as well as a percentage of the Culver's evening sales were donated towards the YP's Convention expenses. All were invited to join and enjoy some great fellowship and food, with thanks being expressed for the continued support.

Congregational activities

Save the date! Cornerstone PRC is hosting a Christian Parenting Conference on Saturday, March 23, 2019. Mark your calendars and look for more details to come!

Young adult activities

Lynden PRC Young Adults have sent out this update concerning their retreat:

We have secured a location for our retreat during July 1-5, 2019! It will take place at Mt. Baker Bibleway Camp. Check it out at <http://www.mtbakercamp.org/home.do>. We hope to include activities such as a day trip to beautiful Artist Point, white-water rafting, and more. Registration is set to open in February 2019, so don't miss out! We encourage any young adults post-high school age to attend. Further details have been posted to our Facebook page: Lynden PRC Young Adults Retreat 2019. Request an invite to see these details, or message the group if you have any questions!

Minister activities

Immanuel PRC in Lacombe, Alberta called Rev. W. Langerak to be their next pastor. On December 23 he declined their call. Grandville PRC in Michigan issued a call to Rev. S. Key to be minister-on-loan to the CERC in Singapore. On December 16 his decline of this call was announced. Grandville's new trio for this position consists of Revs. J. Engelsma, G. Eriks, and E. Guichelaar. On December 9, Trinity PRC in Hudsonville, MI called Rev. G. Eriks to come over and help them.

School activities

From the Federation of PR School Societies comes this important note:

There is a significant need for more good Christian teachers for our beloved schools. This is true in light of increasing enrollment, recently established and emerging schools, and continual teacher retirements. We ask that this need be prayed for and supplication made that the young men and women of your congregation be led by

God to enter into the vocation of a Christian school teacher. This...is intended to bring the serious need for teachers to your attention so this specific request can be brought to our heavenly Father and the need made known directly to your congregation.

The Covenant Christian High Christmas program was held on December 15 at the Jenison Center for the Arts. The band and choirs performed, in addition to special numbers, and a final piece with the Protestant Reformed Student Orchestra.

Mission activities

Rev. Daniel Kleyn and his wife Sharon now have a badminton court on the lawn of their home in the Beverly Hills Subdivision of Antipolo City. This was not accomplished easily. First, they had to dodge the head of the sledge hammer used to pound in the poles as it went flying off. Then, Rev. Kleyn developed some kind of reaction to a plant he encountered while installing the poles. Finally, the court is in good use. Future visitors are invited to a badminton tournament in the Philippines!

Did you know the Protestant Reformed Seminary in the Philippines is now officially slated to begin classes in August of 2019? The three missionaries will be the primary instructors. We are thankful to God for the proceeding of this work. May He bless the endeavor in the future!

Trivia answer

Twenty-eight of the Protestant Reformed Churches in North America use 9:30 A.M. as the time for their morning worship service. Four churches meet at 10:00 A.M. on Sunday morning, and one begins at 10:30 A.M. Perhaps next time we will look at the times of the second worship services.

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

Announcements

Resolution of Sympathy

The Council and congregation of Hope PRC in Walker express their Christian sympathy to Elder Rich Peterson and his wife, Betty, in the death of Rich's brother, **Mr. David Peterson**. May they be comforted in the words of Jesus Christ "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die" (John 11:25, 26).

Rev. David Overway, President
Joel Minderhoud, Clerk

Teacher needed

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

Teacher needed

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

Seminary

All students enrolled in the Protestant Reformed Seminary who will be in need of financial assistance for the coming school year are asked to contact the Student Aid Committee secretary, Mr. Steve Bylsma (Phone: 616-828-3699). This contact should be made before the next scheduled meeting, February 27, 2019, at 4 P.M. in the seminary, D.V.

Student Aid Committee
Steve Bylsma, Secretary

Teacher needed

Faith Christian School of Randolph, WI is seeking one full-time teacher for a high school position in 2019-2020. There is the possibility of teaching some 7th & 8th grade classes depending on the applicant's abilities and preferences. All interested individuals should contact Jack Regnerus (jackbuiltregs@gmail.com or 920-296-3529) or Mike Vander Veen (mvanderveen@randolphfcs.org or 920-296-4406) for more information or to apply.

New address:

Zion PRC, at 7581 12th Ave., Jenison, MI 49428.

Classis West

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

Rev. J. Engelsma, Stated Clerk