

The Outlook

June 2005

Inside this *Outlook*

Volume 55
No. 6

Establishing Leaders.....Rev. Eric Pennings.....2
Rev. Pennings looks at the advice that Jethro gave to his son-in-law, Moses, as the beginning of an administrative structure that should be followed by the church.

The First Wedding: A Copy of the Last Wedding5
.....***Dr. William Dennison.....5***
In this article, Dr. Dennison explains how the union of Christ and His Church is exemplified in the union between Adam and Eve and should be an example for every married couple.

Looking Out and About..... 8

We Confess Rev. Daniel Hyde..... 9
Rev. Hyde looks at Article 24 of the Belgic Confession. This article focus their attention on sanctification and good works as prepared by God and as the foundation of the Christian life.

Awe and Accessibility.....Mr. Paul Flodquist.....11
Mr. Flodquist writes about the difference between a worship service and a celebration service. This insightful article stresses the importance of the sermon and the need to come before God with reverence.

Looking Above.....Rev. Brian Vos.....14
Rev. Vos continues his series on the Book of Revelation. This month, he focuses upon the significance of the throne, the fire, and the sea of glass around the Throne of God in Revelation 4:5-6a.

A Brief History of the Church (III)Mr. Dow R. Haan, Sr..... 18
In this final installment of his series on the church, Mr. Haan addresses the struggles and failings of the Reformed church as it increased in the United States and as it adopted the trends of the world.

The Connection Between Auburn Avenue, Norman Shepherd, and the New Perspectives on Paul.....Rev. J. Wesley White..... 21
Today we are facing the same central issue that sparked the Reformation. Rev. White explains that we can not underestimate the gravity of this discussion taking place in some of our churches today.

P&R Publishing Celebrates 75 Years in Christian Publishing..... 23



Devoted to the Exposition and Defense of the Reformed Faith

Establishing Leaders

This time of year many churches go through the process of selecting and installing office-bearers to their respective roles as elders and deacons. As we reflect on the importance of the role of office-bearers in the church, we should turn our attention to the account of Moses and his struggle to provide effective leadership among God's people.

In the celebration of Pentecost, we were reminded about how God poured out His Holy Spirit on the church shortly after Jesus Christ left this earth. He entrusted His disciples with the formidable task of providing the leadership needed for the quickly growing church at that

time. No church is able to develop a ministry and fulfill its mission mandate in obedience to the Head of the Church, Jesus Christ, without capable office-bearers. It is through the offices of the church that she remains faithful to her calling. Let us consider from Exodus 18 how Moses learned that the church was called to be an effective administrator of God's ministry through its office-bearers.

The Setting (verses 1-12)

In Exodus 18, we see that the leadership required for God's people was not limited to the New Testament church. Just as the Israelites were forming themselves into a

nation, critical issues in leadership arose. Moses had to respond to these issues. Here we meet Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses. He was among many who had heard about God's amazing provision for the Israelites at the Red Sea. In verse 1, we read that Jethro, "...had heard of everything God had done for Moses and for His people Israel, and how the Lord had brought Israel out of Egypt."

The 'everything' referred to here is spelled out in the chapters immediately preceding our text. In Exodus 15 we read about the deliverance from slavery and the defeat of the Egyptians at the Red Sea. After the delivery there are four major crisis situations that the Israelites went through:



Volume 55, No.6 (ISSN 8750-5754) (USPS 633-980) "And the three companies blew the trumpets...and held THE TORCHES in their left hands, and THE TRUMPETS in their right hands. . .and they cried, 'The sword of Jehovah and of Gideon'" (Judges 7:20).

Journal of Reformed Fellowship, Inc.

Send all copy to:
Editor, Rev. Wybren Oord
7724 Hampton Oaks Dr.
Portage, MI 49024
Phone: (269) 324-5132 Fax: (269) 324-9606
Email: editor@reformedfellowship.net
Website: www.reformedfellowship.net

Board of Trustees

Brian Vos, *President*; Steve De Boer, *Vice President*; James Admiraal, *Secretary*; Casey Freswick, *Treasurer*; Ed Marcusse, *Vice Secretary/Treasurer*; Zachary Anderson; Rick Bierling; Henry Gysen; Don Langerak; Henry Nuiver; Herman Sjoerdsma; John Velthouse; Claude Wierenga

Editor: Wybren Oord

Contributing Editor: Dr. Cornelis P. Venema

Business Manager: Shellie Terpstra

Design & Production: AVP Services

Cover Logo: Peter Hoekema

This periodical is owned and published by Reformed Fellowship, Inc., a religious and strictly non-profit organization composed of a group of Christian believers who hold to the Biblical Reformed faith. Its purpose is to advocate and propagate this faith, to nurture those who seek to live in obedience to it, to give sharpened expression to it, to stimulate the doctrinal sensitivities of those who profess it, to promote the spiritual welfare and purity of the Reformed churches and to encourage Christian action.

The publishers of this journal express their adherence to the Calvinistic creeds as formulated in the *Belgic Confession*, the *Heidelberg Catechism*, the *Canons of Dort*, and the *Westminster Confession and Catechisms*.

All contributions represent the personal views of the writers and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the members of Reformed Fellowship, Inc.

Subscription Policy

The Outlook (USPS 633-980) is published monthly by Reformed Fellowship, Inc. (except July-August combined) for \$25.00 per year (foreign subscribers please remit payment in US Funds). Unless a definite request for discontinuance is received, it is assumed that the subscriber wishes the subscription to continue without the formality of a renewal order and he will be billed for renewal. Anyone desiring a change of address should notify the business office as early as possible in order to avoid the inconvenience of delayed delivery. Zip Code should be included. Periodicals postage paid at Grandville, MI and an additional office. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *The Outlook*, 3363 Hickory Ridge Ct., Grandville, MI 49418; OR in Canada to *The Outlook*, P.O. Box 39, Norwich, Ontario N0J1P0. Registered as International Publications Contract #40036516 at Norwich, Ontario.

Advertising Policy

1. *The Outlook* cannot accept announcements or advertising copy inconsistent with the stated purpose of the Reformed Fellowship, Inc.
2. *The Outlook* reserves the right to reject, edit or request

3. All advertisements or announcements are to be submitted to the business office at 3363 Hickory Ridge Ct., Grandville, MI 49418, and must be received at least two months before the publication date.
4. Books, pamphlets or tapes to be advertised are to be screened as to author and content prior to publication of the advertisement, and such material should not conflict with the stated purpose of the Reformed Fellowship, Inc.
5. *The Outlook* reserves the right to limit the size of all announcements and advertisements, and to limit the number of issues in which they appear.
6. All advertisements and announcements must be approved by the board of the Reformed Fellowship, Inc. prior to publication in *The Outlook*.
7. All announcements and/or advertisements approved by the Board of the Reformed Fellowship, Inc. for publication in *The Outlook* shall appear free of charge; however, a gift would be greatly appreciated.
8. This Advertising Policy supersedes all prior policies, resolutions or other statements.

Editorial Office

7724 Hampton Oaks Dr.
Portage, MI 49024
(269) 324-5132 Phone
(269) 324-9606 Fax
editor@reformedfellowship.net Email

Circulation Office

3363 Hickory Ridge Ct.
Grandville, MI 49418
(616) 532-8510 Phone

Business Mailing Address

3363 Hickory Ridge Ct.
Grandville, MI 49418
Email: reffellowship@iserv.com



- 1) Exodus 15:22ff - Bitter waters at Marah became sweet after Moses was instructed by God to throw a piece of wood into it.
- 2) Exodus 16 - The provision of manna and the quail just when the people needed it.
- 3) Exodus 17:1-7 - God provided water from the rock.
- 4) Exodus 17:8-15 - God delivered His people from the Amalekites as Aaron and Hur held Moses' hands up during the raging battle.

All of this takes place just before the events at Mt. Sinai (Genesis 19, 20) when the ten commandments were given to God's people through Moses.

In the first 12 verses of Exodus 18, Jethro came to visit Moses, bringing with him the wife of Moses, Zipporah, and their two children, Gershom and Eliezer. Jethro and Moses had a long conversation about the events that had taken place after Moses had left Jethro. Moses talked about joys and struggles. There was doubt, regret, dissatisfaction, thirst, hunger, grumbling, along with tests of courage and endurance. There was also God's provision for the people through all their wanderings in the wilderness. Verse 12 describes the celebration that took place as they acknowledged God's faithfulness.

The Teaching (verses 13-27)

Jethro's visit coincided with yet another crisis: a crisis of leadership. Moses was leading about two to three million Israelites. In Exodus 12:37, we read that as the people left Egypt, "There were about six hundred thousand men on foot, be-

sides women and children." Imagine the magnitude of the responsibility that God had given to Moses.

The Israelites did not have an internal judicial system at this time. They had just left Egypt where they were under the rule of the Egyptian rulers for 430 years. While in Egypt, they had Egyptian supervisors and some peer leaders among them. This had been strictly an organization for labor. During the three months or so since they had left Egypt, they had to organize themselves as a fighting force to fend off the enemy that came up against them. Now they were being called upon to organize themselves into a new and emerging nation.

In verses 13-16 we read that Moses did everything he could to provide the needed leadership for God's people. He was, however, overwhelmed with the task at hand. In verse 18, Jethro points out that the people were feeling the burden too. "You and these people who come to you will only wear yourselves out. The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone."

Jethro was a wise and perceptive man. When he saw how things are going, he approached Moses (verse 19), "Listen now to me and I will give you some advice, and may God be with you." The plan laid out for Moses was one in which the leadership was to be delegated to qualified leaders chosen from among the

people. These leaders would provide leadership in the majority of the routine activities. The difficult cases, or the ones that had no precedents, were to be handled by Moses.

We should note that Exodus 3 and 4 and here in verse 12, there are already references to elders. These elders were heads of families who represented their families in the sacrifices and in the meetings of the people. When information had to be passed on, these elders would be the ones who were told. Then it was passed along to their extended families.

With Jethro's recommended administrative structure, the nation of Israel had graduated to a new status. Up until the time of the exodus, they were a patriarchal clan identified as belonging to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It was a large family with children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, etc. But now they were to be considered a nation. In order for that to occur, a new kind of leadership had to be organized. After all, very soon they were to enter into a covenant with God.

We are not told how long it took for Moses to process this new idea. But what we are told in verse 24 is that, "Moses listened to his father-in-law and did everything he said." Moses was humble enough and wise enough to listen to the advice.

With Jethro's recommended administrative structure, the nation of Israel had graduated to a new status.

When he chose his leaders, he chose men who had moral integrity. Spiritual qualities superceded popularity. In verse 21 Jethro advised Moses to choose, "...men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain..." Some of these same qualities would later be required of elders and deacons in the New Testament (Acts 6:3; 1 Timothy 3:1-10; Titus 1:6-10).

The Application

The historical redemptive plan of God was unfolding in preparation for the coming of Jesus Christ and the subsequent establishment of the New Testament church. The organization of God's people in the Old Testament was to lay the foundation for the church in the New Testament. That's how we are functioning today. In the Belgic Confession, we read in Article 30, "We believe that this true church ought to be governed according to the spiritual order that our Lord has taught us in His Word. There should be ministers or pastors to preach the Word of God and administer the sacraments. There should also be elders and deacons, along with the pastors, to make up the council of the church." That sounds very similar to the advice given by Jethro to Moses at the time they went through their leadership crisis in our text. Let us consider for a moment how this applies to our present system of leadership as it was patterned in the New Testament church.

The Pastor's Responsibility

In many churches today, the pastor is seen as the 'CEO' of the church over which he presides. This was not the intention of the model of the New Testament Church. The pastor is in fact a teaching elder under

the supervision of the ruling elders in the church. The Belgic Confession teaches in Article 30, "There should be ministers or pastors to preach the Word of God and administer the sacraments." The pastor is ordained to the office of ministry in order to administer the means of grace to God's people, namely the preaching and the administration of the sacraments. Through the preaching and through teaching and pastoral care, the pastor is called upon to apply the Word of God to the lives of individuals and to the life of the church over which God has placed him as under-shepherd. Through his ministry, the Good News of the gospel is to be proclaimed to those who have never heard.

The Office-bearers' Responsibility

There is much discussion today about whether ordination reflects the authority given by Christ or the commissioning to service for Christ. The Scripture places no preference over service or authority. The office-bearer is commissioned to serve with the authority of Christ. That's what ordination and installation is all about.

The office-bearers in the church have a responsibility delegated to them by Jesus Christ the head of the church. The Belgic Confession spells out in Article 30, "By

this means true religion is preserved; [Elders take note!] true doctrine is able to take its course; and evil men are corrected spiritually and held in check — [Deacons take note!] so that also the poor and all the afflicted may be helped and comforted according to their need.

Elders and deacons must be sensitive to the leading of God's Holy Spirit in their respective responsibilities. Elders have the responsibility of supervising the ministries of the church. They are to maintain the purity of the Word and sacraments and faithfully exercise discipline. They are also mandated to oversee the evangelistic mission of the church in its community and throughout the world. Deacons are to provide leadership in the ministry of compassion and mercy in the church, in the community and throughout the world.

The Congregation's Responsibility

There is a word in this for the congregation, as well. In Belgic Confession Article 28 regarding the obligations of church members, we read, "But all people are obliged to join and unite with it, keeping the unity of the church by submitting to its instruction and discipline, by bending their necks under the yoke of Jesus Christ, and by serving to build up one another." The congregation has a responsibility to pray for and respect the leadership provided by the office-bearers. They are responsible to submit to and support the office-bearers in their labors

The office-bearer is commissioned to serve with the authority of Christ.



and to encourage them from time to time. They are also responsible to attend services of worship, develop their gifts and talents, and participate in the ministries of the church.

The model for ministry recommended to Moses by Jethro was not just human advice given from a father-in-law to his son-in-law. It was a divine prescription for the administration of the church of Christ. When we follow God's model for the administration of the ministry, He will bless the efforts and ministries that are developed. The first century church grew rapidly in their faithfulness to God in the administration of the church's ministry. The mission of the church at home and worldwide must reflect the principles provided in this chapter. May God provide us the continued desire to be faithful to Him through the leadership of the office-bearers as we continue to minister in God's name. Above all, may the King of the Church be honored and glorified as we faithfully administer the ministry of the church.

Rev. Eric Pennings is called by the Covenant United Reformed Church of Toronto to serve as a missionary to South Asians in that city.

The First Wedding: A Copy of the Last Wedding

Who planned the first wedding? As we read the Bible, we note that the narrative follows the history of God's work in the creation from the beginning (Genesis 1:1) until Christ's second coming (Revelation 22:21). For this reason, the reader should seek to comprehend the flow of God's revelation in history from the Old Testament through the New Testament.

As the sovereign movement of God's historical revelation is grasped, the reader should realize that the events surrounding the person and work of Christ and His church were planned before the creation of the world. To go a step further, as one grasps the flow of Biblical revelation, one should apprehend that the entire history of revelation is meticulously designed and executed by a sovereign God who essentially works *from the end back to the beginning*. In other words, God knows and plans the end of redemptive-history as He knows, plans, and executes each detail that will lead to that end! As one reads from Genesis to Revelation, the unfolding plan is a mystery; it moves from seed to full growth. In God's mind, however, there is no mystery; the plan is already eternally complete before the foundation of the world as He assures the masterful unfolding of that plan from seed to full growth.

This understanding of God's omniscience is crucial as the Holy Spirit, through Moses, records the first

wedding day in Genesis 2:21-25. As you read the narrative in sequence, we are told that the first wedding comes about because Adam is alone, and that he is in need of a helper (Genesis 2:18). When we read the New Testament, however, we receive further insight and commentary about God's design for the first wedding. Paul discloses the incredible plan of God; the first marriage is patterned after the final and eternal marriage between Christ and His church (see esp. Ephesians 5:22-33; cf. also Matthew 19:1-10; John 2:1-12; 3:27-31; Revelation 21:1-21; 22:17).

In other words, the final wedding is the pattern for the first wedding—the first shall be last, and the last shall be first! Moreover, since the canon of Scripture stands complete, the reader is now obligated to follow the directive of Scripture on the institution of marriage; one must read the first wedding day (Adam and his bride) in light of the last wedding day (Christ and His bride). Specifically, the temporal marriages in this life are modeled after the eternal marriage of Christ (Groom) and the church (bride). Indeed, God, as the all-knowing Sovereign, planned the first wedding day on the basis of the final wedding!

Three Observations

How does the final wedding provide the pattern for the first wedding? Here are some brief observations: first, Adam existed on the earth before his bride came into exist-

ence. Is this done in order to place man in a position of tyranny over against his wife? By no means! It points to Adam as the federal head of the human race (Romans 5). Adam can only be thought of as the federal head of the human race if there is a human race, which, in turn, presupposes a bride and procreation. In other words, Adam's federal headship is tied organically to his future bride (Eve) and the human race that will come from their union as husband and wife.

Likewise, the second Adam, Jesus Christ, exists before His bride comes into existence. As the eternal Son of God, Christ co-exists in the realm of eternity with the Father and the Spirit; He exists long before His bride comes into existence in the creation. Even so, the federal headship of the second Adam only has meaning as He is united to His bride—His church—procreated through His Spirit (beginning at Pentecost). Indeed, the pattern is set: the two Adams exist prior to their brides, and their federal headship presupposes a bride and procreation.

Second, Adam's bride was created out of his flesh while he was asleep (Genesis 2:21-22). Likewise, as the last Adam (Christ) became flesh (John 1:14), His bride was created out of His work done in the flesh—what the Psalmist prophesied as Christ's "sleep of death," i.e. His death and resurrection (Psalm 13:3). Hence, in the first and second Adam, the bride is created in the situation of what the Bible calls, "sleep." In this context, you can hear that the praise delivered by the first Adam for his bride are the same words embraced by the in-

carate Groom for His bride: "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh" (Genesis 2:23b; cf. Ephesians 5:30).

The pattern is now set for a third observation; the husband is to leave father and mother and join his wife (Genesis 2:24; cf. Matthew 19:3-6). Why is such a pattern set for the first Adam? Because it is modeled upon God's foreordained future plan concerning His Son. The time will come in history when the final and eternal Groom, Jesus Christ will leave the confines of heaven and

***Sin can invade and
turn our hearts into
ugly parasites
towards those
whom we love the
most.***

His Father so He can be joined to His bride, the church (Matthew. 1:23; John 1:1, 14; Philippians 2:5-11).

Through Christ's death and resurrection, and through faith in Him, Christ and the church become one flesh (Ephesians 5:22-33). In John's gospel, such language of intimacy is dominated by such phrases like Christ abiding in His people as they are abiding in Him (e.g. John 15:4-10). In Paul's epistles, the intimacy of the marriage relationship between Christ and His bride (believers) can be seen in the dominant phrase, "in Christ" (e.g. II Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 1:7, 11).

Hence, such an intimate relationship between Christ and His bride cancels the shamelessness of sin as it provides the eternal model for the original state of Adam and his wife's shamelessness before each other (Genesis 2:25). In other words, Adam and his wife's shameless state in the garden is modeled after the eternal state of Christ's thorough cleansing of His Bride (cf. Romans 10:11).

**The Invasion of Sin in
Marriage**

As we make these parallel observations between the first wedding and the final wedding, we cannot overlook the fact that shame (sin) entered the creation in the context of the first marriage. In fact, Satan attacked, and sin ruined, the original pristine fellowship between the Creator-creature and the companionship between the first groom and his bride. Herein, sin invaded powerfully the marriage bond. Sin brings such transgressions as the quest for power, independence, mistrust, deceit, suspicion, and the feelings of hate and anger. In light of our first parent's sin, marriage can experience the absence of love, peace, harmony, and respect. Indeed, sin can create a hostile environment in a marriage; it can invade and turn our hearts into ugly parasites towards those whom we love the most.

How does marriage, ripped by the passing of our first parent's sin to the entire human race, find a solution? As Adam's relationship to his bride was patterned after Christ and His bride, likewise our marriages are to be patterned after Christ and His bride. The pattern of Christ and His bride transcends,



and alone transforms, the present sinful state of marriage. For this reason, husbands and wives need to hear the words of the apostle Paul to the Colossians: “And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight—if indeed you continue in the faith...” (1:21-23a).

As sin invades the marriage bond, every Christian couple must fix their eyes upon the reconciling work of Christ for His bride. Only through the grace of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit can such repugnant sin be conquered in order to attain a faithful marriage in our temporal lives. Although not comprehensive, permit me to make a few observations for husbands and wives.

Concerning Husbands

In light of their profession of faith and union with Christ, husbands are to follow the final and eternal pattern set by Christ the Groom. Husbands are to *love* their bride just as Christ loved His bride and gave Himself for her (Ephesians 5:25, 28). How? Paul captures Christ’s pattern in at least three ways: 1) he is to give himself for her, 2) he is to sacrifice and suffer in joy for her, and 3) he is to live the sanctified life before her so that she will live the sanctified life (Ephesians 5:25-27). A husband in the Lord lives this way before his wife in order to present her as his glorious bride. Like Christ for His bride, the husband holds his bride up before the world without spot and wrinkle—holy and

without blemish (Ephesians 5:26-27).

Moreover, he is to nourish her in the Christian faith and cherish her as the bride of faith (Ephesians 5:29). As the husband takes this directive from Scripture concerning his wife, one can see how Christ’s life for His bride is the model for transforming our marriages and restoring the state of shamelessness between the husband and his wife. As the husband emulates the headship of

***Only through the
grace of Christ and
the power of the Holy
Spirit can repugnant
sin be conquered in
order to attain a
faithful marriage in
our temporal lives.***

Christ to His bride, he is responsible, through reliance upon the Holy Spirit, to present her holy and without blemish before the world.

Concerning Wives

In light of their profession of faith and union with Christ, wives are to follow the final and eternal pattern found also in Christ. What is that pattern? The pattern is found in Christ *submitting* to His heavenly Father as well as the church *submitting* to Christ (Luke 22:42; John 15-17, 37-38; John 4:9-11; I Corinthians 11:1-3; Ephesians 5:23-24).

When we address *submission* based upon the glorious relationship of the Son to the Father, what would it look like? For sure it is *not submission* that means tyranny or oppression; rather, it is *submission as an equal* (the woman is taken from Adam’s side; the Father and the Son are one). Furthermore, the submissive relationship between God the Father and God the Son as an equal is captured by God providing Adam with a help-mate, who is his wife (Genesis 2:18).

In order to understand this Biblical pattern, let us recall how the husband is to live before his bride: 1) he is to give himself for her, 2) he is to sacrifice and suffer in joy for her, and 3) he is to live the sanctified life before her. Simply, the wife is to *submit and receive* faithfully her husband’s glorious pattern of love, sacrifice, and sanctification since it is rooted in Christ’s own life for His bride. Only in this realm is submission defined by mutual love and respect. Herein, like the Father’s authority over His Son, the husband’s authority over his wife will never include authoritative domination or abuse. Rather, the husband’s authority (headship) is expressed and experienced in the context of mutual communion and fellowship—a concept so foreign to modern egalitarianism and feminism!

Think about this Biblical pattern from another direction: how is the church (bride) to submit to Christ (her Groom)? As the church (bride), we are to enter into Christ’s life-pattern; we are to receive faithfully His love (He

gave Himself for us), His sacrifice (He is the sacrificial Lamb of God that suffered joyously for us), and His sanctification (He lived the sanctified life before us and for us). Hence, here lies the pattern for the bride in a temporal marriage to her husband; she is to submit to your husband's love, sacrifice, and sanctification just like the church (bride) submits to Christ's (Groom) love, sacrifice, and sanctification. The pattern is the same for both.

Let's provide a single example: let's say that a husband begins to work fifty hours each week at his job. As the husband does this, both husband and wife realize that they miss each other very much, and that the hours in the workplace are making each one weary. In this case, however, the husband is justified for working longer hours since his employer has a deadline on a project that needs to be finished. Moreover, the husband complies because he realizes that his diligence on the project will provide employment security for himself. Such security definitely supports the long range prospects of a stable income for his wife and family. As he works these longer weeks, he honestly does so because he loves his wife and is sacrificing himself for her and his family. If this is truly the case, then his wife is obligated to submit to such an action of love since he is living the pattern of Christ before her.

However, if she detects that he is working the extra hours in order to declare his independence from her, or as an act of self-promotion and greed, then she has every

right to question and challenge his motives as not conforming to the pattern of Christ. In other words, in the context of blatant sin on the part of her husband, she has a right before the Lord and the officers of the church to question and challenge the sinful motives of her husband. For this reason, the husband must be conscious of his Christ-like responsibilities before his bride; he is to define his position of authority in terms of love, sacrifice, and sanctification towards his bride.

As couples marry in the Lord, they must focus their eyes upon the eternal marriage ceremony and festival of our Lord and His Bride so that such marriages will always resemble that eternal marriage—the end shapes the beginning, the end shapes the present state. If we truly comprehend and live in the glorious conscious state of the final wedding of Christ and His bride, then tenderness, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering, forgiveness, peace, the silence of complaint, and the bond of love will reign in our marriages (see Colossians 3:12-14, 18-19)! In this way, those who marry in the Lord will easily flow into eternity as their marriage dissolves into the glorious transcendent marriage between Christ and His bride (Matthew 22:23-32; Revelation 21:1-21).

William D. Dennison, Ph.D. is the Associate Professor of Interdisciplinary Studies at Covenant College in Lookout Mountain, GA.

Looking Out and About

- Rev. Henry Van Olst, a graduate of Mid-America Reformed Seminary who has been serving the Parkland Reformed Church (URC) of Ponoka, Alberta, has accepted the call extended to him by the Rehoboth United Reformed Church of Hamilton, Ontario.
- Professor Edmund P. Clowney, who taught Homiletics for many years at Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, passed away on March 20, 2005 at the age of 87. Rev. Clowney also served as president of Westminster Seminary and in later years taught some courses at Westminster Seminary in California.
- Burton Heights Christian Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan, which is celebrating its centennial this year, has decided to disband. The last service will be held on June 26. The congregation has voted to give its large, beautiful building to the Grace Korean Christian Reformed Church of Wyoming, Michigan.
- Rev. Charles Krahe, who retired recently from the Board of Reformed Fellowship passed away on April 18, 2005 in Sante Fe, New Mexico at the age of 80. Rev. Krahe was a graduate of New Brunswick Theological Seminary and had served several churches in New Jersey and Michigan. In recognition of Rev. Krahe's long service to Westminster Theological

Continued on Page 24



We Confess

An Exposition & Application of the Belgic Confession

Article 24-25: Of Sanctification and of Good Works & Of the Abrogation of the Ceremonial Law and the Agreement of the Old and New Testaments

As we mentioned in our study of the Belgic Confession's articles on justification, our Lord Jesus Christ won for us two great benefits (what the Reformer's called the *duplex beneficium*), justification (arts. 22-23) and sanctification (arts. 24-25). Justification deals with the guilt of sin and sanctification with the pollution of sin. This, from the outset, should orient us as to what sanctification is. All too often we hear that justification is God's word and sanctification is our work, that God has done His work now it's time for us to do ours. The Reformation not only rediscovered that justification was by grace alone but that sanctification is also a work of grace alone.

New Life

Article 24 begins by speaking of the new life we have been given by the power of the Holy Spirit, saying,

We believe that this true faith, being wrought in man by the hearing of the Word of God and the operation of the Holy Spirit, regenerates him and makes him a new man, causing him to live a new life, and freeing him from the bondage of sin.

The true faith that embraced Christ and His righteousness for justification was a gift of God, being "wrought," or, "created," in us by

the Word and Spirit. This is that great truth that "faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of Christ" (Rom. 10:17). Yet this is not merely an "outward" hearing of the Word, but a powerful work or the Holy Spirit. As the Canons of Dort would later say,

What, therefore, neither the light of nature nor the law could do, that God performs by the operation of the Holy Spirit through the word or ministry of reconciliation; which is the gospel concerning the Messiah, by means whereof it has pleased God to save such as believe, as well under the Old as under the New Testament. (III/IV, 6)

Because true faith comes from this source, it "regenerates" us from death to life. Notice, then, how this new life of the believer is described with two subordinate clauses in the opening paragraph: it causes us *to live* a new life and frees us from the bondage of sin. Such is the power of the Word and Spirit when they are joined together.

Faith Working Through Love

What this means is that Protestants do not believe that justification by faith alone means the end of holy living. Article 24 opens by answering the typical Roman Catholic ob-

jection to free justification which our Catechism also answers, "But does not this doctrine make men careless and profane?" (Q&A 64) The apostle Paul answers this charge when he says,

Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? (Romans 5:20-6:2)

This is only a humanly devised problem that seeks to keep tender consciences in bondage not to sin, but to the Pope. This is why the Confession continues the thought above about us being given a new life, saying,

Therefore it is so far from being true that this justifying faith makes men remiss in a pious and holy life, that on the contrary without it they would never do anything out of love to God, but only out of self-love or fear of damnation. Therefore it is impossible that this holy faith to be unfruitful in man; for we do not speak of a vain faith, but of such a faith which is called in Scripture a *faith working through love*, which excites man to the practice of those works which God has commanded in His Word.

Knowing (both cognitively and experientially) that we have been justified by Christ's work and grace alone is the most liberating and enlivening doctrine there is. I cannot adequately explain to you what my own heart felt when I was first introduced to this doctrine. Having been baptized Roman Catholic and then converted in Pentecostalism, I never was sure of my standing before God. I can remember being on my hands and knees nightly while in college asking for a sign from God that I was filled with the Spirit of His love. Yet that never happened and my despair grew.

It was only when I was told that I was right with God *only on the basis of Christ's merit* and that I could receive it *only through faith alone*, that what our Confession is saying came true. Having been justified, we now love God and are able to serve Him as living sacrifices where before we did things out of self-love and fear of God's damnation. The person who has never experienced the doctrine of justification by faith alone cannot understand this, and so comes up with false objections such as the one our Catechism answers.

When we were justified and the guilt of sin has been dealt with, the Holy Spirit also began to deal with the pollution of sin within us. And so, we believe that justification and sanctification are two distinct benefits Christ won for us, yet they are inseparable benefits. The same

faith that justifies also begins to sanctify. The faith that embraces Christ's obedience for justification also begins to enliven us to obedience to God and his Word.

Good Works

And so the Christian becomes one who seeks to please God out of love, not fear, by doing the works God has commanded. Our Confession goes on to say, "These works, as they proceed from the good root of faith, are good and acceptable in the sight of God, forasmuch as they are all sanctified by His grace."

What is remarkable is that we, who once were not accepted by God, are accepted (justification); and that what we used to offer in self-love and fear that was not acceptable, is now acceptable to God! Never forget that what we offer is not accepted because they are done by us, but because they are sanctified by the grace of God. What does this mean? Very simply, even "the best works of the saints" (Canons of Dort, V, 2) are blemished by sin, and thus are "filthy rags" (Isaiah 64:6) because they do not meet the standard of God's infinite holiness; yet, as His children, our Father accepts them and sanctifies them by His grace so that they can be called "good works." To state it again, we are justified by grace alone and we are sanctified by grace alone.

But do not rely on them to establish or validate your relationship with God. Although our good works are

sanctified by God's grace,

Nevertheless they are of no account towards our justification, for it is by faith in Christ that we are justified, even before we do good works; otherwise they could not be good works, any more than the fruit of a tree can be good before the tree itself is good.

Here we see not only a logical distinction between justification and sanctification, but a temporal distinction. The reason we cannot base our standing before God on our good works is because we were justified before we could even do good works. Good works are the result of being accounted righteous before God, not the reason or even a co-reason. The Confession uses the biblical illustration of the tree, saying that just as a bad tree bears no fruit, so too, we did not bear fruit when dead in our sins. Yet when we were justified, we became as a tree that was given new life and thus began to bear fruits.

And so we do good works as humble servants, not self-righteous workers who demand a payment:

Therefore we do good works, but not to merit by them (for what can we merit?); nay, we are indebted to God for the good works we do, and not He to us, since it is He who *worketh in us both to will and to work, for His good pleasure*. Let us therefore attend to what is written: *When ye shall have done all the things that are commanded you, say, We are unprofit-*

Good works are the result of being accounted righteous before God, not the reason or even a co-reason.



Study/Application Questions for Article 24-25

1. Whether or not you have a background in the church, what are your first thoughts, if any, when you hear the words “sanctification,” “holiness,” “piety,” “Christian life?”
2. Define sanctification.
3. How long does sanctification last? (Hint: think of the biblical metaphor of the Christian life as a pilgrimage)

able servants; we have done that which it was our duty to do. In the meantime we do not deny that God rewards good works, but it is through His grace that He crowns His gifts.

Remember from the opening of this article we said that too many of us have been taught that sanctification is *our* work. Scripture speaks differently. It describes sanctification as the work of the Holy Spirit who works in and through us. So Scripture speaks of good works we do as being “prepared beforehand” (Ephesians 2:10) as the work of sanctification as God’s working in us for His good pleasure (Philippians 2:13).

The Foundation of the Christian Life

Finally, Article 24 ends with a note about the confidence of the Christian. Some of what it says in this last paragraph has already been said, so we get a glimpse into the pastoral concern Guy de Brès, the author of our Confession:

Moreover, though we do good works, we do not found our salvation upon them; for we can do no

work but what is polluted by our flesh, and also punishable; and although we could perform such works, still the remembrance of one sin is sufficient to make God reject them. Thus, then, we would always be in doubt, tossed to and fro without any certainty, and our poor consciences would be continually vexed if they relied not on the merits of the suffering and death of our Savior.

As we have already said, and as the Confession said, we do not do good works in order to be justified. After all, all of our works are polluted by sin and therefore deserve to be punished. The Confession even says that if we did a good work, God would reject it because of our continual struggle with sin. This is why our Catechism says we are not to look to our good works when our faith is weak or when we are in doubt:

But why cannot our good works be the whole or part of our righteousness before God? Because the righteousness which can stand before the judgment seat of God, must be perfect

throughout and entirely conformable to the divine law, but even our best works in this life are all imperfect and defiled with sin. (Heidelberg Catechism, Q&A 62)

Thus there is no pure work the Christian does out of pure motives. Because of this, we would always wherever it is found.

The Third Use

And as the Christian need to continually be killed by the Law and given life by the Gospel, so too we need to continually be challenged to live out this new life in gratitude. The 10 Commandments, of course, are the basic text of the parameters of the Christian life, as they teach us to love God and our neighbor.

This emphasis on the life of gratitude and thankful obedience is a hallmark of the Reformed Christian life, as we seek to live as prophets, priests, and kings in this world. This is why our forefathers used the Ten Commandments in all their catechetical preaching and instruction in the Faith.

The summary of these two articles is that the Christian’s life of sanctification is to be one of love for God, humble service, and devotion to pleasing God by continually falling on our knees but also getting up and living for Christ.

Rev. Daniel R. Hyde is the pastor of the Oceanside United Reformed Church in Oceanside, California.

Awe and Accessibility

Within North American Evangelicalism there has developed over the past several years a false dichotomy between awe and accessibility in worship. Although many congregations are unaware of this “either-or” mentality, it is far too prevalent to be mere coincidence.

How many churches now refer to their services as celebrations rather than worship? There is something more than just semantics involved in this change. Language is important in that it defines the activities of our everyday lives. Celebration is man-centered and has reference to exuberance within the human heart. Worship is directed toward God as an act of devotion from human beings for their Lord. Worship is not primarily something that Christians receive, but rather, it is something we give.

Some might object that both worship and celebration consist of giving and receiving. They are our offering of our praise to the Triune God, and the subsequent receiving of blessing from Him. The distinction is one of emphasis, however, and that difference is not subtle.

A celebration presupposes that we know enough to rejoice in the right things. But for human beings, with our limited knowledge and understanding, this is often not the case. How many of us are pious enough to celebrate the trials that inevitably challenge our faith? True, we might go through the motions of celebration, vainly trying to convince ourselves that we should be rejoicing in the midst of sorrow, but

this is not the reverence that our Heavenly Father and ascended Lord deserve.

A true heart of worship offers praise to God whether times are good or bad. This is because the focus is not on our own condition but the nature and character of the Almighty God whom we worship. Through the centuries, the Church has recognized that praise is due to the Lord no matter what the human condition might suggest. The words of the prophet Habakkuk are instructive: “Though the fig tree may not blossom, nor the fruit be on the vines; though the labor of the olive may fail, and the fields yield no food; though the flock may be cut off from the fold, and there be no herd in the stalls; yet, will I rejoice in the God of my salvation” (Habakkuk 2:17-18).

I wonder how much pragmatism rather than faith dictates the form and content of many Sunday morning services in North American churches. The assumption of those who promote the celebration model seems to be that worship must be accessible. And that to be accessible, it must be friendly. As we look back over the centuries of church history, this is a novel approach.

Yet, in democratic societies where consumerism prevails, it is perhaps inevitable that a certain amount of religious salesmanship is to be found. In order to fill the church on Sunday, an attractive product must be offered. This explains why the celebration model relies heavily

upon a multimedia presentation, rather than focusing upon the intrinsic power of God’s Word. Film, deafening music, and emotional testimonies are designed to engage the senses of the audience. It is as if truth could be absorbed through the senses rather than being filtered through the mind. This explains why the result of such celebrations is more a sense of emotional well-being rather than any lasting spiritual comfort or moral challenge. Such spiritual depth can only be communicated by a faithful presentation of the Word of God. It cannot simply be absorbed on the level of human emotion.

The Center of Worship

The force of influence of God’s Word can be mitigated and even emptied of its power by improper presentation. The Apostle Paul understood this clearly when he wrote to the Corinthians Church: “For God did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not in cleverness of speech, that the Cross of Christ should not be made void” (I Corinthians 1:17).

Even if a sermon is biblically sound, the weight and force of the minister’s words can be decreased and trivialized by what surrounds the divine communication from God to His church. Although the inherent power of God’s Word cannot be compromised, the impact of Scripture in the hearts and minds of those who hear can be adversely affected if the tenor of the presentation diverts attention away from the meaning of the biblical text. Such a diversion is easier than any of us would like to admit. The fickle and insecure nature of the



human heart is always ready to receive a substitute for the message of God's Word. Especially if what is being substituted is presented as being in support of, rather than in competition with, the sermon.

This argument presupposes two things. First, that the centerpiece of the worship service is the sermon. Second, that the purpose and focus of every sermon is to produce a sense of awe for God in the heart of the worshiper. Whatever else the sermon attempts to achieve, a sense of being humbled by the majesty of God, is to be communicated to those in attendance.

Some will certainly raise the objection that it is not necessary or even desirable for the sermon to be central to the service of worship. As forms of worship within the church vary, there exists freedom within such forms. One might prefer a liturgical form of worship, others something less formal. While the expressions of worship are many - song, prayer, preaching, dance, sacrament, and drama - what is critical to all, is an awareness on the part of the worshipper that they have been in the presence of God who is at the same time love (I John 4:16) and a consuming fire (Hebrews 12:29). Such an awareness inevitably produces within the human spirit a sense of awe and profound humility above all things. It is only after a sense of wonder has been experienced that the human heart can then move on to the responsive emotions of joy and gratitude.

The Celebration Model

Unfortunately, the celebration model, in its desire to be relevant and accessible, has focused upon

joy rather than awe as the central core of worship. But without the foundation of awe, such joy is only superficially God-directed.

It makes little difference whether praise songs are repeated, or hymns are sung just once, if instrumental accompaniment does not foster reflection upon the lyrical content of the song. What the celebration model does not recognize is that praise and worship is created primarily by words which give birth

The purpose and focus of every sermon is to produce a sense of awe for God in the heart of the worshiper.

to reverent thought, not by musical instruments, lighting, decoration, or any other external props which either subdue or excite the emotions.

From the very beginning, Protestant worship has believed the faithful exposition of God's Word is central to worship. Such preaching, supported by song, prayer, and sacraments, was the approved means whereby man offered praise to the Lord. Protestantism only betrays the beliefs of its founders if it turns to non-verbal stimulus in an effort to draw closer to God.

Without lyrical depth and integrity, "praise and worship" songs become little different than the religious icons used within non-Protestant traditions of Christendom.

Such music stirs the emotions in much the same way as icons stir human imagination. Yet, neither emotion nor imagination are the principle ways in which God communicates His presence to those who draw near in worship. As beautiful and wonderful as they might be, music and works of art constitute a man-made rather than divine relation. Helpful - yes. Instructive - perhaps. But only of peripheral importance in relation to the Word of God as it is delivered and explained through expositional preaching.

True Celebration

King David's example is instructive to all who would draw near to the Lord with true praise and integrity in worship: "So David went down and brought up the Ark of God from the house of Obed-Edom to the City of David with rejoicing. When those who were carrying the Ark of the Lord had taken six steps, he sacrificed a bull and fattened calf. David, wearing a linen ephod, danced before the Lord with all his might" (II Samuel 6:12-14). David's exuberance in worship was condemned by some, but it was accepted by the Lord because it had its origin in both awe and sacrifice. His celebration was the result of his drawing near to God with reverence and wonder.

Where the celebration model of worship falls short is in its failure to recognize that the emotional response of the worshipper - be it dancing, tears, or the silent meditation of the heart - must flow naturally from a genuine encounter with God. There is no need to "lead" the congregation into an attitude of praise before they have encoun-

tered the object of their rejoicing through the preaching of the Word, prayer, and sacrament. It is not being unkind to say that celebration without reflection is entertainment, not worship.

Mr. Paul Flodquist is an elder at Covenant of Grace OPC in Oxnard, California. He has also taught Systematic Theology part-time at a local Bible College.

Looking Above

A Series on the Revelation of Jesus Christ

Revelation 4:4-6a

“The Throne, Fire, and a Sea of Glass”

As we move to Revelation 4:5-6a, we find movement in the text itself. Here we move from the throne of God to the seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, only to move from the seven lamps of fire to the sea of glass that is before the throne.

Since the text begins with the throne of God, and since the fire and the sea of glass are oriented to that throne, let us also begin with the throne of God. “From the throne proceeded lightnings, thunderings, and voices...”

The imagery brings us back to the scene at Mt. Sinai, where there were lightnings and thunderings, and where the voice of the Lord God Almighty spoke, bringing terror and fear to those who heard. “Now all the people witnessed the thunderings, the lightning flashes, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, they trembled and stood afar off. Then they said to Moses, ‘You speak with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die’” (Exodus 20:18-19). The people witnessed the might, power, and holiness of God, and they knew that such holiness would consume them and kill them!

In setting before us the throne of God, together with the lightnings, thunderings, and voices that proceed from it, Revelation 4:5a is presenting us with the holiness of

God—that holiness before which no sinner can stand. The throne of God confounds sinners, threatening to consume them in wrath and judgment, for from the throne proceeded lightnings, thunderings, and voices. The same phrase is used three more times in the book of Revelation.

It is used in Revelation 8:5-6, “Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and threw it to the earth. And there were noises, thunderings, lightnings, and an earthquake. So the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.” We have mentioned before that the sounding of the seven trumpets are harbingers of the last trumpet, harbingers of the judgment to come. The noises, thunderings, and lightnings of Revelation 8:5, then, are connected with wrath and judgment.

The same phrase is used again in Revelation 11:19, “Then the temple of God was opened in heaven, and the ark of His covenant was seen in His temple. And there were lightnings, noises, thunderings, an earthquake and great hail.” Notice what we read just before that in verse 18, “The nations were angry, and Your wrath has come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged.” Again the lightnings, noises, and thunderings are connected with wrath and judgment.



The throne of God, as presented to us here in Revelation 4:5a, is not meant to comfort, it is meant to terrify!

The same phrase is used yet once more in Revelation 16:18, “And there were noises and thunderings and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth.” Again, notice what we find just prior to that, in verse 17, “Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, ‘It is done!’” Again the noises, thunderings, and lightnings are connected with wrath and judgment.

All of this leads us to the conclusion that what we have here in Revelation 4:5 is the threat and the terror of the judgment and wrath that flow forth from the throne of the living God. The throne of God, as presented to us here in Revelation 4:5a, is not meant to comfort; it is meant to terrify! It is meant to bring us face to face with the Almighty!

We are standing here, as it were, in the very Holy of Holies. God dwells there in the Holy of Holies, enthroned between the cherubim. His holiness threatens to consume us. It threatens to confound us and destroy us. That is the significance of the thunderings, lightnings, and voices that proceed from the throne in Revelation 4:5.

We move out of the Holy of Holies, the throne room of God, into the Holy Place. There the lampstand burns with light perpetually before

the Lord. We read in verse 5b, “Seven lamps of fire were burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.”

The Fire

The emphasis in this phrase is not so much upon the light that the seven lampstands provide; the emphasis, rather, is upon the fire. “Seven lamps of *fire* were *burning* before the throne.” Here we are brought face to face with fire.

The fire reminds us again of God’s holiness, and of judgment. God appeared to Moses at Mt. Horeb in the burning bush, and said, “Remove your sandals, for the place where you stand is holy ground.” The fire brings us again to Mt. Sinai, where God spoke and delivered His law from the midst of the fire (Deuteronomy 5:4). The fire brings us to the events following the episode of the breaking of the 2nd commandment with the golden calf, where the Israelites offered to God false worship that was not pleasing in God’s sight, leading Moses to burn the sin of the people in fire (Deuteronomy 9:21). The fire brings us to the destruction of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram—those who rebelled against the authority of Moses—whose families were consumed in fire (Numbers 16:35). The fire brings us to the plagues upon Egypt, where God rained down darts of fire from heaven (Exodus 9:23). The fire brings us to Elijah, who called down fire upon the fifty twice (II Kings 1). The fire

brings us to Isaiah, who beheld the holiness of God, and whose lips were touched with a burning coal, that he might bring God’s Word to the people (Isaiah 6). The fire brings us to the words of Isaiah, “Behold, the name of the Lord comes from afar, burning with His anger, and His burden is heavy; His lips are full of indignation, and His tongue like a devouring fire The Lord will cause His glorious voice to be heard, and show the descent of His arm, with the indignation of His anger and the flame of a devouring fire” (Isaiah 30:27ff.). The fire brings us to the prophecy of Amos, where no less than six times in chapters 1 and 2, he speaks of the Lord bringing fire to devour. The fire brings us to Sodom and Gomorrah, where God rained down fire and brimstone upon the cities of the plain, a portent of the judgment to come.

Yes, the fire is a portent of the judgment to come. Isaiah says, “Behold, the Lord will come with fire and with His chariots, like a whirlwind, to render His anger with fury, and His rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by His sword the Lord will judge all flesh; and the slain of the Lord shall be many” (Isaiah 66:15-16). Malachi says, “Behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, and all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be stubble. And the day which is coming shall burn them up” (Malachi 4:1). With those words the Old Testament comes to a close.

The New Testament opens with the same words. Jesus comes and is proclaimed as the winnowing who throws the chaff into the fire (Matthew 3:10); He is the one who baptizes with fire (Matthew 3:11). He

speaks of the gehenna of fire (Matthew 5:22). He speaks of the fire into which fruitless weeds will be thrown (Matthew 13:40). He speaks of a place where the worm does not die and the fire is not quenched (Mark 9:48).

The seven lamps of fire which burn before the throne of God, which are the seven Spirits of God, denote—like the thunderings, lightnings, and voices—judgment and wrath. The fire speaks of God’s holiness, a holiness that consumes. In order to approach the holy and living God, we must go through the fire, and that fire must either transform us or consume us.

We are standing here, as it were, in the Holy Place, one step removed from the Holy of Holies. The lampstand was there in the Holy Place, illuminating the way to the Holy of Holies, but also reminding him who would enter the Holy of Holies that God is a consuming fire.

The Sea

From there, we move out of the Holy Place. Into the Outer Court, and specifically to the sea of glass, like crystal (Revelation 5:6a). Now we are standing in the outer court of the temple, where we find the bronze laver—sometimes called the sea. That laver that was made from the mirrors of the women (Exodus 38:8). Given the brilliance of that sea, it is appropriately called a “sea of glass.” It was here, of course, that the priests washed before entering the Holy Place.

The sea of glass brings us back not only to the laver in the outer court of the tabernacle, however. It also brings us back to the chaotic waters

of Genesis 1:2, where darkness was over the face of the deep. It brings us back to the division of the waters above from the waters below, as God created the firmament on the second day of creation. It brings us back to the waters of judgment that were unleashed from the heavens above in the waters of the flood, those waters over which God sat enthroned (Psalm 29). It brings us back to the crossing of the Red Sea, those waters bringing salvation for Israel, condemnation for Egypt.

The water, then, like the fire and like the lightnings, thunderings, and voices, stands before us in terms of judgment and wrath. We are standing here in the Outer Court, one step removed from the Holy Place, two steps removed from the Holy of Holies. The laver was there in the Outer Court reminding him who would enter the Holy Place that he must be washed before he enters the Holy Place—that he must be cleansed before he stands before God who is a consuming fire.

The Meaning Behind the Imagery

As we move from the Holy of Holies to the Holy Place to the Outer Court, we move from the imagery of the throne of God to the fire, and from the fire to the water. What are we to make of all this imagery?

Very interestingly, all of this imagery comes together in the New Tes-

tament. John the Baptist says in Luke 3:16, “I indeed baptize you with water; but One mightier than I is coming, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.” You might also note the words of Jesus in Luke 12:49-50, “I came to send fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! But I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how distressed I am till it is accomplished.” All of the imagery of Revelation 4:5-6a is found here: fire, the Holy Spirit, and baptism, which includes water.

John the Baptist announces that Jesus will come baptizing with the Holy Spirit and fire. Jesus Himself, though baptized by John the Baptist, also speaks of the baptism He has to undergo. To what is Jesus referring? He is referring to His death on the cross. It is there that He is baptized! It is there that He goes through the water of judgment! It is there that He goes through the fire of judgment! It is there that He is cast out from the Holy of Holies as God the Father thunders against Him in wrath. It is there that He is cast out from the Holy Place as God the Father consumes Him in the fires of judgment. It is there that He is cast out from the Outer Court as God the Father looks upon Him as one who is unclean.

So completely forsaken is Christ as He hangs upon the cross that He is banished from the presence of God

In order to approach the holy and living God, we must go through the fire, and that fire must either transform us or consume us.



altogether. There is no room for the Son of God in the Holy of Holies, no room for Him in the Holy Place, no room for Him even in the Outer Court.

Christ is utterly forsaken of the Father that we might never be forsaken. He is cast out that we might be brought near. And how beautifully that is hinted at in the text as well, for you'll notice, the sea is like glass! The waters are calm, smooth, and non-threatening. The sea is like glass—so non-threatening, so smooth, so calm—you can almost stand upon it!

Understand where this passage takes us! We begin with the fear and threat of judgment and wrath symbolized in the thunderings, lightnings, and voices that proceed from the throne. From there we move to the fire of judgment symbolized by the seven lamps which burn before the throne. From there we move to the sea, the waters of judgment, before the throne! But there, to our joy and delight, we learn that the waters are like glass, they are like crystal! Christ has gone through the fire of judgment! Christ has gone through the water of judgment! The sea is glass, and all is well for those who are in Christ!

But why, you may wonder, do we move from the Holy of Holies outward to the Holy Place? And why do we move from the Holy Place outward to the Outer Court? Doesn't this movement suggest that we are moving away from the Presence of God?! Not at all, for the sea of glass in the Outer Court is calm to tell us that we have been washed in Christ, that we have been cleansed in Him. Having been washed and cleansed in Jesus

Christ, we have no need to fear the fire of the Holy Place, for it will not consume us. Neither do we have any reason to fear the consuming wrath of God in the Holy of Holies, for it will not consume us. Christ has been cast out that we might be brought in.

The Warning

There is also a warning here, however. The waters of the sea and the fire of judgment will be brought together in the judgment of the wicked. They will be cast into the lake of fire, where they will be tor-

The sea of glass in the Outer Court is calm to tell us that we have been washed in Christ, that we have been cleansed in Him.

mented forever and ever. The end of the wicked: eternal torment in the lake of fire. The end of the righteous in Christ: eternal joy standing on the sea of crystal.

As we consider Revelation 4:5-6a, we find movement in the text itself. Here we move from the throne of God to the seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, only to move from the seven lamps of fire to the sea of glass which is before the throne. If you belong to Christ, you have moved through the Outer Court, having been washed in Christ. You are now being transformed in the Holy Place, as it were,

by the Spirit of God represented by the fire. And one day you will stand in the cosmic Holy of Holies—the New Heavens and New Earth—before the throne of God to worship Him for all eternity.

All of this is because Christ has taken our place. We cannot conclude with better words than those which the Lord spoke through Isaiah: “Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; you are Mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, nor shall the flame scorch you. For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior” (Isaiah 43:1-3).

Rev. Brian Vos is the pastor of the Trinity United Reformed Church in Caledonia, Michigan. He also is the President of the Board of Reformed Fellowship.

A Brief History of the Church

Part Three: The Reformed Church in America

After a long and hazardous journey in crossing the Atlantic Ocean, our forefathers landed on these American shores. They came with the history of the Reformation and the experience of persecution as their background. They came with but one purpose in mind, to be able to serve God in accordance with the teachings of Scripture, and in strict adherence to the letter and spirit of reformed confessional standards, and polity.

The Reformed Church of America had settled in America prior to the arrival of these Netherlanders, so being unfamiliar with their new surroundings it seemed most logical for them to affiliate with that denomination.

After some period of time they came to realize that some practices in that church were uncomplimentary to their orthodox vision of the reformed faith. The new immigrants also desired to organize Christian schools for the education of their covenant youth. These together with some minor differences led to controversy, and eventual separation. The Netherlanders founded what we have come to know as the Christian Reformed Church.

The Christian Reformed Church remained true to the orthodox faith of its founders for well over a century. During that time there was a steady influx of new immigrants, primarily from the Netherlands. Upon their arrival, most, if not all, settled in ethnic reformed commu-

nities, and most lived within walking distance of the church. Those who farmed came to church by means of horse drawn buggies or sleighs. In this way people of the reformed faith remained in close affinity with one another and formed close-knit ethnic neighborhoods, its members living under the very eye of the church, so to speak.

Sundays were quiet days, respected by all as The Sabbath Day. Neighborhood stores, owned and operated by members of the community, were closed on Sunday. Children's bikes, skates, and balls were laid aside for the Sabbath. They learned that the Sabbath was God's day. All this led to the solemnity of the day, the only distraction was the ringing of the various church bells calling the people to worship. All in all, one had the unmistakable feeling that Sunday was a special day, The Lord's Day.

All with rare exception sent their children to the Christian school and Catechism, which were faithfully attended. If someone was missing on roll call, the parents were advised, and should the absence persist, the parents could soon expect a visit from the church elders.

Following the end of World War I things began to change. The economy improved, causing the times to be dubbed "The Roaring Twenties". Automobiles were becoming more common, but had to travel on mostly gravel roads. This enabled the younger generation to

break out of their ethnic neighborhoods to seek out more worldly types of entertainment. Radio, quite recently invented, replaced the Victrola in most homes. It represented the first invasion of the outside world into the Christian home. While its message and music were restricted and monitored, it was the beginning of a more modern approach to Christian living.

Then in 1929 came the stock market crash, followed by the Great Depression. The banks closed and people lost their savings. There were many business failures and massive unemployment. With unemployment and the loss of savings, people were unable to make their mortgage payments, and many lost their homes, as the banks foreclosed on them. The depression lasted through most of the thirties, people survived with the help of a government work program, which was commonly known as the W.P.A. All in all it was a most distressful time, leaving all thoughts of the Roaring Twenties behind.

World War II began on the heels of the depression. America entered the war on December 7, 1941, when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor and destroyed our Pacific fleet. It took four years to defeat the Japanese, and the war ended in the Spring of 1945. With the war ending, the church was about to experience some drastic changes in its longstanding orthodox position.

As our young men were released from the service, they returned home to their ethnic neighborhoods, but not for long. They married, and built new homes, in mixed neighborhoods. In doing so, they deprived



themselves of the coherency and the protective qualities of living within the ethnic neighborhoods. Over time they began to absorb some of the life style of their more worldly surroundings, and hastened the end of ethnic neighborhoods.

Having gone through the unsettling effects of the war, and no longer hindered by ethnic restraints, many began to accept a more modern view of Christian life. At about the same time the advent of television brought the world directly into the Christian home. The joint effects of these changes were soon to become evident in the life of the church.

Worldly Amusements

One of the first of such effects occurred when the Christian Reformed Synod received overtures, requesting the annulment of its stand on worldly amusements, that of theater attendance, the modern dance, and card playing. After considerable debate on the floor of Synod, it acquiesced to the overtures, and rescinded its stand on the grounds that the church could not legislate sin.

It would appear that this ruling flew directly into the face of the Reformed Doctrine of the Antithesis, in which God ordained (put) enmity between the church and the world. This means that the Church is duty bound to oppose the world and worldliness with all the power of its being. However the annulment would do just the opposite. It would serve as an appeasement to the world. To oppose the world is not only necessary for the well being of the Church, but it is essential to its very being. If a church should cease being antithetical to the

With the war ending, the church was about to experience some drastic changes in its longstanding orthodox position.

world, it would no longer be the Church. The Church would soon forget that the antithesis is an actual fact. That enmity between the Church and the world is not passive, but decidedly active.

This annulment of the ban on worldly amusements weakened the church's stand against the world. It silenced the pulpit from speaking out in an identifiable and specific manner against worldliness. Soon the pulpit spoke only in general terms with regards to worldliness, which failed to serve the mandate of the Church to oppose the world, and all worldliness as God has ordained.

Hollywood's productions are worldly in character, and epitomize all that is evil in the world. Their films for the most part are unfit for Christian viewing. Christian participation in accepting Hollywood's offerings will give Satan the opportunity to anesthetize and poison the mind, and dull the conscience against sin. In turn the Christian's stand against the world is weakened, and thus the spiritual life of the Church is weakened as well.

Along with the freedom for theater attendance, the annulment removed all restrictions from participating in the modern dance or its equivalent. For over a century the Church considered and ruled that the modern dance was an immoral and worldly form of enter-

tainment. Immoral because it opens up avenues for evil intentions, and often leads to further acts of immorality. The Scriptures admonish the Christian to flee temptation.

Today this form of entertainment, contrary to the biblical teaching of the antithesis, is being introduced to our covenant youth in some of our Christian colleges and high schools. Some parents applied pressure on school boards to hold dances in the school gymnasiums, offering to provide monitors. One might ask the question if the dance does not provide opportunity for evil intentions, why then the need for monitors to supervise? In some of our Christian schools, the modern dance meets with approval, while Reformed doctrine is out, often replaced by church history.

Satan has many arrows in his quiver. Television represents one of them. Today there is a television in practically every home, it becomes a convenient tool in helping to dull the Christian's stand against the world. The old saying, "Familiarity breeds contempt" is right on the mark.

We are bombarded with immoral scenes and dress. Our children grow up watching all this on a daily basis. It should be no surprise that as they mature that they see no wrong in catering to worldliness. They have cut their eyeteeth on this smut. They see little contrast between the church and the world since they grew up side by side with both. Both the church and the home must share the respon-

sibility for this situation. Both have failed to stress that God ordained the antithesis with the world. In so doing they weaken the spirituality of the church and home.

Through these and other means, the world has become a part of our life as never before, and the lives of Christians, as well as the Church are adversely affected. Everywhere we turn today the acknowledgment of God is being erased from our midst. Satan works diligently to marginalize Christians and remove all traces of God from our Christian way of life. It would appear that he is making inroads in the Reformed Church, as well as in our Christian schools.

The Lord's Day

Once we drop our guard and make compromises with the world, more compromise is sure to follow. God said: "I am the Lord God: walk in my statutes, and do them. Hallow my Sabbaths, and they shall be a sign between me and you, that ye may know that I am the Lord your God" (Ezekiel 20:19-20).

To hallow the Sabbath means to regard that day as sacred, to set it apart for sacred use, and to regard it with reverence.

Many Christians today hurry home from morning worship service to watch national sports programs on public television. Others make use of the Sunday paper to fill their minds with mundane thoughts or rustle through myriad number of store ads, in the hope of finding bargains for purchase on Monday. In the meantime the children spend time reading the comics, rather than study their catechism lesson. These and other such habits violate God's

Sabbath, and should be viewed as a desecration of the Lord's Day.

Women in Ecclesiastical Office

Once we compromised with the world to a point, we faced further compromises in the Church. Synod soon received overtures to allow women to serve in the offices of the Church.

Scripture emphasizes that these offices should be the responsibility of men, but synod decided to allow for women deacons. At first, it left it up to each council to decide whether or not to have women deacons to serve in their church. Soon, however, women as elders and ministers was approved. It is one more move towards modernism in the Church and a move that clearly opposes scripture.

Worship

Our forefathers established a liturgy based on Scripture, one uniform liturgy to be used throughout the denomination. Synod was overtured to remove these restrictions, and allow each church to set up its own liturgy. This overture was approved. Now instead of the Word being central to the worship service, we have various forms of entertainment to compete with the Word. At the extreme end we see movies or plays replacing the preaching of the Word. One is reminded of the people of Israel, as they said to Moses: "Speak thou with us and we will hear, but let not God speak with us lest we die" (Exodus 20:19).

The Church today has accepted much of the world into its midst, and has moved a far pace from the

orthodox faith inherited from our forefathers.

Conclusion

The Church, having compromised its stand against the world, opened the door for Christians to participate in worldliness. Christians supposedly have been transformed from darkness into light. They have made profession of their faith, and promised to walk obediently before God. True faith consists in three parts, knowledge, conviction, and surrender. If the Christian really has the knowledge and the conviction, he will reach a point in their life when he needs to make choices. "I want to do one thing and God asks me to do another!" If one has the conviction associated with true faith he will surrender and chose God's way, rather than the way of the world.

The evil times in which we live are offering easy choices to walk side by side with the world. Christians should remember that God has ordained us to oppose the world and its worldliness. Satan is ever present to help one make the wrong choices. Some having supposedly seen the light, having reached a fork in the road of life, chose to walk in darkness.

Therefore an exhortation is in order: "*Walk as children of the light.*" *Ephesians 5:8*

Mr. Dow Haan, Sr. is a member of the Covenant United Reformed Church in Kalamazoo, Michigan.



The Connection Between Auburn Avenue, Norman Shepherd, and the New Perspective on Paul

Though there are many theological issues involved in this modern controversy, there is none more important or central than that of justification. While the three names/groups mentioned above have many things in common (as well as many things in which they differ), there is one issue upon which they all agree: That the works that Paul excludes from justification are *not all our works* but *only some works*.

It is astonishing, yet true, that even today we are facing the same central issue that sparked the Reformation. In our small, conservative Reformed Churches the central tenet of the Reformation is being challenged from many quarters. Once again, the most prominent question is that of justification and the central exegetical debate is whether *all* our works or *only some* are excluded from justification.

For example, when Paul writes “that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law” (Romans 3:28), all of the above-mentioned groups agree that only *some* deeds or *some* works are being excluded here. The Reformation asserts to the contrary that this text, and others like it, teach that *all* deeds are excluded from faith as an instrument of justification.

Martin Chemnitz, the author of the Formula of Concord, wrote, “The absolute heart of the article of justification is this maxim of Paul that the Law with its works is ex-

cluded” (*Loci Theologici*, p. 531).

The Protestant Reformers both derived and defended the doctrine of justification by faith alone on texts such as the following: “The righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed” (Romans 3:21). “Not having a righteousness of my own, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ” (Philippians 3:9). “Through faith ... not of works” (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Further, larger passages like Romans 4 and Galatians 3-4 were cited to show how intricately and intensely Paul argued that *all* works of the law must be summarily and absolutely excluded (whether as an instrument for, or merit of, our justification). In his commentary on Galatians 3:18, Calvin writes,

Who will dare to explain this as applying to ceremonies alone, while Paul comprehends under it whatever interferes with a free promise? Beyond all doubt, he excludes works of every description.

But this is exactly what the Romanists did by interpreting this kind of language as a mere reference to the ceremonial law. When the soteriological construct of Rome was challenged with such passages, the papists, in a vain attempt to “explain away” these passages, argued that such passages referred to either (1) ceremonial works alone or (2) some sort of sinful works or

those works done prior to regeneration.

In order to disprove the first [ceremonial works], the Reformers simply pointed out the context of Paul’s polemic. In the verses that surround his tirades against the inclusion of works in the grace of justification, the law in all of its facets is explicitly mentioned (Romans 3:20, 4:5, 7:7 (which mentions the 10th commandment); Galatians 3:10-13, 21).

In order to disprove the second [sinful or pre-regenerate works], the Reformers emphasized the fact that some of the strongest statements against and warning about the inclusion of works in the grace of justification were actually addressed to those who were already believers. Thus, Abraham and David are spoken of as being justified by faith alone (Romans 4:1-8), even after they became believers.

All works (whether they are thought of as an instrument or as merit) must be excluded from the faith that justifies. This is as true for the person just being converted as it is for someone who already believes. The sole and sufficient ground of our justification before God is Christ’s active and passive obedience alone; which is received through faith alone.

This is the core issue and this is also where all of the persons/groups mentioned above have fallen together into error: They all assert that the works that Paul was so interested in excluding refer either to ceremonial works alone or sinful works/pre-regenerate works.

In defense of this bold assertion, we cite Steve Schlissel: “‘Justification’ in Galatians and Romans deals with the status of Gentiles . . . Paul’s concern is the status of the Gentiles as Israelites indeed, through faith, not through ritual circumcision or the various identity markers uniquely connected with it” (Beisner, Calvin E. *The Auburn Avenue Theology: Pros and Cons*, p. 33, and see pp. 33-36). Again, according to Mr. Schlissel, Paul’s polemic involves what we call the ceremonial law rather than *all* the works of the law.

Similarly, Rich Lusk, in commenting on Galatians 3-4 writes that the main issue was that “They were insisting that the new people of God continue to mark themselves out in the old way, namely, by the now defunct badges of Torah. It’s clear these are the items under discussion in Galatians—circumcision, dietary laws, calendrical observances, and so forth” (*The Auburn Avenue Theology*, p. 133, and see pp. 132-136).

Turning to N.T. Wright we read,

Earlier readings of Galatians, particularly in the Reformation tradition, had so emphasized the wrongness of ‘justification by works,’ understanding that phrase in a Pelagian or Arminian sense, as to make it difficult to articulate any sense of moral obligation or moral effort within the Christian.

In other words, he rejects a reading of “works” that would exclude *all* works from our justification. Here we must ask, “What, then, is the

proper reading of ‘works’?” It seems that Wright has anticipated such a question by writing:

The boundary marker of this messianic community is therefore not the set of observances that mark out Jews from Gentiles, but rather Jesus the Messiah, the faithful one, Himself; and the way in which one is known as a member of this messianic community is thus neither more nor less than (Christian) faith (Wright, N.T., *The Letter to Galatians, Exegesis and Theology*,

<[http://www.ntwrightpage.com/Wright Galatians Exegesis Theology.htm](http://www.ntwrightpage.com/Wright_Galatians_Exegesis_Theology.htm)>).

Thus, for Wright, Paul’s polemic in Galatians is not aimed at excluding *all* works from faith or justification but rather simply to exclude the “boundary markers” that “mark out Jews from Gentile” (the ceremonial law).

Along a slightly different line, Norman Shepherd writes:

The “works” (Ephesians 2:9), or “works of the law” (Romans 3:28; Galatians 2:16), or “righteousness of my own derived from the law” (Philippians 3:9), or “deeds which we have done in righteousness” (Titus 3:5) which are excluded from justification and salvation, are

not “good works” in the Biblical sense of works for which the believer is created in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:10), or works wrought by the indwelling Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9; Galatians 5:22-26), or works done from true faith (I Thessalonians 1:3), according to the law of God, and for his glory, but are works of the flesh (Gal. 3:3) done in unbelief (Galatians 3:12) for the purpose of meriting God’s justifying verdict (Thesis 24, http://www.hornes.org/theologia/content/norman_shepherd/the_34_theses.htm).

Once again, the works excluded “from justification and salvation” are not *all* works but only *some*.

Thus, we find that there is a profound and most disturbing connection between all of the people / groups mentioned above. That connection, as we have shown, involves primarily a re-evaluation of Paul’s polemic against works contributing to our justification.

And let us not underestimate the gravity of such a re-evaluation. The Reformers’ arguments (based upon Romans 3-4 and Galatians 3-4) that the works which God has excluded from the grace of justification refers to *all* our works is *absolutely central and fundamental* to the biblical doctrine of

***The sole and sufficient ground of our justification
before God is Christ’s active and passive
obedience alone; which is received through faith
alone.***



justification by grace alone through faith alone! If this exegetical argument falls, then so does the entire Protestant Reformation.

Of course, some may still hold inconsistently to the doctrine of justification by faith alone, but this will not stop the consequences of their teaching. If we undermine the foundations of a particular doctrine, even if we continue to hold to it, the next generation will most likely reject it and take our logic further.

Consequently, however complex this issue may seem, we assert that it is really quite simple, and we must choose whose side we are on. On the question of justification by faith alone we must answer this question: What is the meaning of “the works” mentioned in Paul’s polemics against works in our justification?

On the one side, we have the Reformers who say, “*all works* are excluded from our justification.” On the other side, we have Rome, Auburn Avenue, the NPP, and Norman Shepherd who say, “*some works* are excluded from justification.” This is neither a new nor minor controversy; for herein lies the difference between true Christianity and false, the false Gospel and the true.

Rev. J. Wesley White is the pastor of the New Covenant Presbyterian Church in America located in Spearfish, South Dakota.

P&R Publishing Celebrates 75 Years in Christian Publishing

Founded in 1930 to publish a magazine, P&R Publishing Company will celebrate its 75th anniversary year, in part, by publishing about forty new books.

The company’s magazine was established, according to founder Samuel G. Craig, “to state, defend, and further the system of thought and life taught in the Bible.” He added that this “system of thought and life,” in his judgment, “has found its most complete and ... its most vital expression in the standards of the Presbyterian church.” Seventy-five years later, P&R remains committed to the same goal and convictions.

Craig and theologian J. Gresham Machen founded the Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company in Philadelphia, with offices in the Witherspoon Building. His son, Charles, moved the company to his home in Nutley, New Jersey, and his grandson, Bryce, moved it into a new building in Phillipsburg, New Jersey in 1978. Bryce Craig remains the company president. The company’s offices and warehouse still occupy the same building.

For all the continuity shown in its leadership and theological orientation, P&R has experienced significant growth during the last five years. In 1999, the company published seventeen new titles, ending the year with 204 active titles. In 2004, the company released thirty-eight new titles, ending with 366 active titles. Sales increased during

this period by 91%.

During the last five years, Craig has surrounded himself with managers Bob Fales (business), Al Fisher (editorial), Jesse Hillman (sales and marketing), and Joe Oliff (shipping). Joining Craig on the board of this non-profit company are C. Samuel Craig (grandson of the founder), Robert denDulk, and Steve Vanderhill.

Six years before the company’s founder closed down the magazine, P&R published its first book entitled *The Five Books of Moses* by O. T. Allis (1943). By the time of Samuel Craig’s death in 1960, his company had published more than fifty books. Throughout P&R’s history, it has been a quiet force in the evangelical community worldwide for faithfulness and biblical teaching.

In 2005, P&R will produce and distribute *The Reformation Study Bible: English Standard Version*, a highly anticipated study Bible published by Ligonier Ministries. In his introduction, general editor R. C. Sproul writes: “The Reformation Study Bible contains a modern restatement of Reformation truth in its comments and theological notes. Its purpose is to present the light of the Reformation afresh.”

Reformed Fellowship, Inc.

3363 Hickory Ridge Ct.

Grandville, MI 49418

(616) 532-8510

Bible Study Materials

(\$4.00 each plus *\$2.00 postage)

Nelson Kloosterman

Walking About Zion,
Singing of Christ's Church in the Psalms
Gospel Power Magnified through
Human Weakness
(II Corinthians)
The Law of the Lord as Our Delight
(Deuteronomy)
Pilgrims Among Pagans
(I Peter)

John Piersma

Daniel

Henry Vander Kam

Sermon on the Mount
Ephesians
I & II Thessalonians
I Timothy
I Peter
I John
Parables
Acts (Chapters 1-13)
Acts (Chapters 14-28)
Amos

Mark Vander Hart

Genesis 1 - 11
(\$8.00 plus *\$2.00 postage)

Catechism Materials

Learning to Know the Lord
*by P. Y. De Jong (\$1.50 plus *\$2.00 postage)*
First Book of Christian Doctrine
*by Hylkema & Tuuk (\$2.50 plus *\$2.00 postage)*
A Beginning Course in Christian Doctrine
*by P. Y. De Jong & John R. Sittema (\$2.00 plus *\$2.00 postage)*

Other Materials

Cornelis P. Venema

But for the Grace of God
An Exposition of the Canons of Dort
(\$6.00 plus *\$2.00 postage)
What We Believe
An Exposition of the Apostles' Creed
(\$6.00 plus *\$2.00 postage)

John R. Sittema

With a Shepherd's Heart
Reclaiming the Pastoral Office of the Elder
(\$15.00 plus *\$3.00 postage)

Norman Shepherd

Women in the Service of Christ
(\$2.00 plus *\$1.00 postage)

Looking out and About

Continued from Page 8

Seminary in Philadelphia, the seminary endowed a chair in systematic theology in his name. He also received an honorary doctorate of theology from that institution.

• Mid-America Reformed Seminary received word that the TRACS (Trans-national Association of Christian Colleges and Schools) Commission has decided by unanimous vote to grant full accreditation to the seminary. The accreditation marks the culmination of a lengthy process of application and is indeed a milestone in the history of Mid-America Reformed Seminary.

Subscription Form

One year US \$25.00 Two years US \$50.00 Three years US \$75.00

Canadian and foreign subscribers: please submit all payments in US Funds.

Name

Street

City

State

Zip

Denominational Affiliation

Reformed Fellowship, Inc.
3363 Hickory Ridge Ct.
Grandville, MI 49418

The Outlook welcomes writers to submit articles that promote the spiritual welfare of our readers and promote the Reformed faith to editor@reformed_fellowship.net