

● “try to forsake our antithetical position ... we begin to ... convince ourselves that there is still some good in it.” *Should a Christian be entertained by K-Pop* by Cheryl & Bernice Lim ● “...measuring ourselves by biblical standards, only a Christian is truly patriotic” *Is This Home? Truly?* by Lee Yang ● “Compromising and giving up our spiritual well-being ... family and Church is ... an unwise thing to do” *Psalms 128:2* by Elder Wee



*“For thou shalt eat
the labour of thine hands:
happy shalt thou be,
and it shall be well with thee.”*

salt shakers
joel 3:16 matthew 5:46

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WELCOME TO THE 27TH ISSUE OF SALT SHAKERS!

By God's grace, the past couple of months have been full of blessings for CERC. We have witnessed two weddings on either side of our annual church camp. With that many things happening, we are glad to have an issue full of articles that are current and relevant to a Christian's life.

Temptations are constantly in the lives of God's people. In this day, much of it comes through the mass media. Popular songs and bands or groups are "role models" for the world to follow, and very often, we are also drawn to them. How should a Christian young person respond? Sexual temptations are also very real to Christian couples who are courting—how does God's Word instruct us? Look out for these articles!

In the church world today, many are tired of the same old Word of God, stressing the need for more exciting ways of communicating with God, and clamouring after spiritual gifts for miracles and new revelation. Is that what being "filled with the Spirit" means in Ephesians 5:18? Is God's Word not enough for us? Does it mean that we do not believe in miracles anymore? Look out for these articles!

Many of us work diligently every day, so that we can earn some money to support ourselves. Work can be so difficult and torturous that we can't imagine that God has given us such labours to do. Can we draw any encouragement from God's Word? We may even overwork to save up as much as we can for future enjoyment. Be warned, the Bible tells us that where our treasure is, there will our heart be also! If you store up lots in your earthly home, will your heart ever be longing for Home? Our earthly home is Singapore, and we will be celebrating National Day on 9th August; what is our attitude towards this event? Look out for these articles!

May you be blessed by God's Word as it is brought to you through the articles that follow. Blessed reading, and remember to pass the Salt!

Christ regardless, paul

Filled with the Spirit

>> Josiah Tan



Josiah Tan is a confessing young adult in CERC. He heads the Salt Shaker's committee and is actively serving in the young people's committee (Covenant Keepers).

Eph 5:18 And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;

The Temptation

It is the time of the year that we may become spiritually complacent; thus, we must keep these words of life in our hearts—"be filled with the Spirit". At the youth retreat in June, we learnt the importance of reading. Reading ought to be a high priority for a Reformed child of God, and so he must set aside time for it. We experience the powerful Spirit of God working in our hearts through the study of His Word.

The week after youth retreat, we had our Annual Church Camp at Desaru, Malaysia! Old friendships were strengthened and new friendships forged. In Christ, these four days and three nights were but a simple foretaste of the blessed communion we would have in Heaven. We are thankful for this most blessed time of fellowship. We also learnt of God's establishment of His marvellous Covenant of love and friendship with us. Even if the camp lasted an infinite number of days, we would just scratch the surface of learning about God's relationship of love with us.

Now that retreats and camps are over, it is time to go back to our schools and vocations. We are now faced with many real temptations in our daily lives. Besetting sins seem to grow stronger as the demands of life tire us. But does this mean that we can now forget the gathering of the saints? Is it now time to willingly give ourselves to be swamped with work and play,

thinking that somehow this is the responsible or practical way to live?

Will we now be contented, or even expect, to have to a cold walk with God in the business of life? Will we resign to think that the reading and singing of spiritual songs is good only if we had the time? The devil will try to lay a snare on us while we are fighting against our sinful natures. That snare can take the form of thinking that having a close, warm, and intimate relationship with God is impractical in our demanding lives. We may not live in such hopelessness. We may never exchange being filled with the Spirit of God for being drunk in our own sins.

The Power of the Spirit

In all of eternity, the Spirit was there. The Holy Spirit is co-equal and co-eternal with the Father and the Son. Thus, the Spirit was not created; not lesser or greater than the Father and the Son in the trinity (Athanasian Creed). That is the Spirit that God calls us to be filled with.

About 6000 years ago, in the first day of the creation of the universe, the Spirit did tremendous work. In the vastness of an earth that was void and without form, when there was but darkness all over, the Spirit was moving over the face of the waters (Genesis 1:2). The almighty God created the universe, and He calls us to be filled with the Spirit which was in that trinity.

One of the most dramatic recording of the Spirit's work in the Old Testament was recorded for us in Ezekiel 37. There, in the background,

lay a large valley filled with many bones—bones that were bone dry. It was utter desolation in that valley. Was it possible that those bones could be made alive? The prophet Ezekiel was commanded by God to preach His Word to the dry bones! Ezekiel preached, “O ye dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live: And I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am the LORD.”

Suddenly, there was a mighty noise and a fierce rattling in that valley. The dry bones started moving toward each other. Tendons started to form round the bones, then flesh, and then skin. But there was still no life in them. Instead of dry bones, there were now an exceeding great number of bodies lying in the valley. What amazing power the Word of God has!

Then, the Lord instructed Ezekiel to prophesy, “Thus saith the Lord GOD; Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.” Then, the exceeding number of bodies lived and stood up. An exceedingly great army was assembled. The breath that gave life to the bodies was the breath of God—the Holy Spirit. That is the Spirit God calls us to be filled with.

Spirit Given in Grace

Those dry bones in the valley is a picture of our spiritual condition. We

were dead in our trespasses and sin. But the Spirit of God regenerated us. He gave us life and made us to join the exceeding great army of the King of kings. Before, we had the spirit of error in us, telling and loving the Lie. But by God’s grace, we now have the Spirit of Truth (1 John 4:6). We love and cherish the Truth, who is Christ.

Once, we had the spirit of fear in our idolatry. We were once swinging from swelling pride to deep depression when we believed in the false gospel—one that teaches we are saved by grace plus our desiring and works. But now, God through the Spirit of Truth, has guided us to love a sound Gospel. Dry bones do not choose God—they cannot. God breathes life into us and gives us the desire of God. This power of the Holy Spirit works many fruits within us. One of the most wondrous fruit is comfort. In our past of idolatry or believing in a false gospel, worrying and relying on our works for salvation was seen as being responsible, and even pious. The Spirit of Comfort, comforts our souls from all worry and anxiety. The Spirit bears witness to our spirit that we are forgiven of our sins when we come broken, humbled, and confessing our sins before God. Be filled with the Spirit of Comfort.

Now that our retreats and camps are over, and work and studies are kicking into full swing, we need not fret about what the outcome of the spiritual trials that lie ahead will be. We need not fret because we are given the Spirit.

The Spirit and God’s Unbreakable Covenant

God is a God that has the most blessed communion within himself. One being, yet three whole persons that are co-equal and co-eternal. The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father to the Son in love. The Holy Spirit proceeds back to the Father from the Son in love. Because God loves us and so poured out His Spirit upon us, we know for sure that God will never leave us but has sealed us to Himself. We need not fret the spiritual and physical trials ahead.

Facing Temptation by Trusting God

As we have seen earlier, this Spirit of God that is given to us has infinite power. This Spirit was given to us in grace; He changed us from dry bones into a glorious army for Christ. This Spirit is the core part of God’s Covenantal life within Himself and was poured out to us from the Father through Christ (our Covenant Head). Looking forward at the months ahead, we can facing them knowing that this Spirit of God will never leave us but will abide with us forever (John 14:16). May we seek not to live a sin-controlled life, but a Spirit-controlled life, knowing that the Spirit of God now dwells in each and every one of us as God’s children.

In the next article, we shall continue our discussion on what it means to be filled with the Spirit and how to be filled with the Spirit.

“ Looking forward at the months ahead, we can facing them knowing that this Spirit of God will never leave us but will abide with us forever (John 14:16). ”

BEING A SINGLE YOUTH

>> Pastor Ronald van Overloop



Rev Ronald van Overloop is a minister of the Word at Grace Protestant Reformed Church in West Michigan, USA. In March 2011 and October 2012, he came to Singapore to assist our church in her pulpit needs.

The request from Salt Shakers to write expressed the desire for an article which “would give the youths a proper perspective to their current status of being single.”

To be single refers to two groups of people in the church of Jesus Christ. One, it describes those who are young and growing up in the home of their parents. Two, it describes those who are out of the home of their parents and are not married. In this article we want to speak concerning those who are in the first group: children and young people who are still under the care and supervision of their parents and are often living with siblings.

This is the period of their lives where they are constantly learning and being taught. It is a time of much development – physically, psychologically, and, we pray, spiritually. It is understood that the perspective of most youths is that this period of their life is not permanent. It will last for a while, but most desire to be married; at which point, of course, their being single will end.

What characterises this period of their lives? Is there anything they ought to be conscious of during this time of their lives?

This stage of life is a time of learning. The most important thing to be learned is obedience. Almost as important is for a child/youth to learn the necessity, and develop the ability, to cooperate – to work together for the sake of the harmony of a whole. It is learning that his life is according to the plan, and in the control, of God—the Creator of heaven and earth. And it is learning that this Creator has established rules which govern the whole of his life.

Early on, the child is to learn that the whole of his life is to consist in obeying God. God’s commandments are present in every aspect of our lives—and constantly so. Also, he learns that he is not really obeying God unless he is loving Him with all of his heart, mind, soul, and strength, and is also loving those that He purposefully places in our life in the same way. The presence of siblings gives the child/youth opportunities to learn all the social skills necessary for living together and cooperatively as members of a body.

The parents are in the home and it is the parents whom the child initially learns to obey (Exodus 20:12; Ephesians 6:1-3). Very early in their childhood, the parents set before the child the necessity of obeying them. There are things which his parents would have him do, and there are things which they forbid. How is it that the child often learns to say “No” very early in its life? Is it not because

they are often told, “No”? Very early on, the child learns to obey because he finds that there are undesirable consequences if he disobeys.

The child consciously learns obedience as he grows older. He learns that there are many other authorities in life, some to whom his parents must give obedience. The parents teach that obedience is to be given to those in authority: in the realm of the government, employment, church, as well as in the home. There are rules to the games they play which are to be obeyed to play the game correctly. Obedience is required constantly. The child learns to obey.

This is a challenge for the young child and for the youth. Every human is born with a will—the desire to do what they want and like, as well as with the desire not to do other things. When what we want agrees with the command to obey, things go smoothly and well. But when what we want or do not want conflicts with a command, then there is conflict and unhappy consequences.

It is the wisdom of God that obedience is learned in the sphere of the family. The family is the normal school in which obedience to laws is first taught. Consider some of God’s wisdom of this divine arrangement.

First, learning obedience occurs best in the family. Obedience is the willing bending of one’s will to that of another. When God created man in His own image, it meant, in part, that man is fashioned with an intelligence and a will. What is the relationship of this will in the creature with the will of the Creator? In both providence

as well as in grace, how does God's will remain sovereign while the will of the creature remains its own, with consistency and spontaneity? This is best illustrated within the government of the Covenant, of which the family is a beautiful picture. In it we can see how authority and power blends with freedom. In the Covenant, God receives us into His own family, taking man into His home. It is while dwelling with God and enjoying Him that saved man willingly consecrates himself to God's authority and declares that it is his delight to keep the commands of the Father. He submits his will to that of His heavenly Father's and blends his will to that of those His Father places next to him. "With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:2-3).

Second, the lessons of obedience are taught much better in small groups. This has been called the "minuteness of subdivision". Everyone in the human race needs to learn these lessons, but when the human race is broken up into small sections, then the principles of obedience and cooperation are better taught. During the whole of one's childhood (a very formative period of one's life) these principles are set before the child. God wisely breaks up the human race into these compact domestic spheres. In these spheres, authority bears on them constantly. Another benefit in the home is the authority can be less severe because of the ease and constancy with which it is exercised.

Third, the harshness of authority is tempered by parental love. In this small sphere, the parent is supreme with no appeal to a higher court and the power to enforce is ever present. But parental love softens the rule. A parent's love lines the yoke with gentleness.

Fourth, in God's wisdom, the

instruction to obey is vested into two complements with joint supervision. The father's will is often more robust and unyielding while the mother's will often bends with the child, toning down the severity. The result is a joint rule rendered both strongly and lovingly.

The family reflects the leading principles of grace. Using wisdom and love, the godly parent strives to seize every opportunity during the most formative period of a child's life to teach him the necessity and the joy of obeying the will of the heavenly Father. God declares that He knows Abraham, "that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment" (Genesis 18:19). God knows Abraham, that is, He knows Abraham in the intimate love of the covenant relationship. God knows Abraham in such a way that Abraham knows God, knows the relationship God has established and maintains with him, knows the bitterness of disobeying Him, and knows the joys of doing His will.

God knows Abraham in order that Abraham will command his children and his household the same lessons God was giving to Abraham. What he did with his children and household was the same as what God did to him. The godly, earthly, father reflects the heavenly Father.

That which Abraham learned from his heavenly Father was to keep the way of Jehovah, to do righteousness and justice. He learned to willingly submit his will to His heavenly Father's will. That is why every godly parent, like Abraham, would want to teach—with all love and wisdom—their children those same lessons. Willingly deny your own will by willingly submitting your will to the way of Jehovah, to do His righteousness in compliance with His justice.

And this is what it means to be a

child/youth. The challenges and the blessedness of being single during our youth is so we might learn to bend our will to the will of our Creator and Saviour. To do so is extremely contrary to our will because of the presence of our old man. The natural will of every child/youth is selfish and self-centred, with varying degrees of stubbornness. As a result the child/youth has to learn, through constant and consistent instruction and example, that he must deny himself and submit to the will of his invisible heavenly Father. This obviously begins by doing so to his visible earthly father (and mother). God establishes earthly parents as pictures of the perfect Parent/Father.

The two simple lessons of youth are: 1. Deny self, do not trust your own will, lean not on your own understanding; and 2. Obey your heavenly Father, bend your will to His, in all your ways acknowledge Him, and trust His love.

Very briefly, this describes the challenges of youth and describes the blessedness of the youth raised within the sphere of the Covenant.

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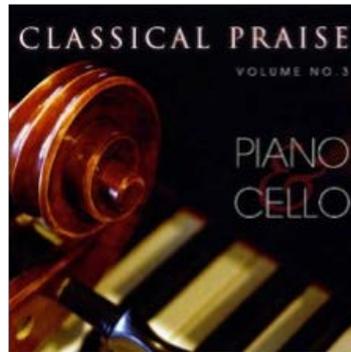
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MUSIC REVIEW

>> Lisa Ong



Lisa Ong is a confessing youth adult in CERC.



1. Album: Classical Praise, Volume 3

My favourite tracks are:

- *God is so Good*
- *All Hail The Power of Jesus' Name (tune of Psalter 197)*
- *Praise To The Lord, The Almighty*
- *Jesus, The Very Thought of Thee*

I have enjoyed listening to instrumental Christian music since I was a child. My first encounter with such instrumentals was when Julia (my second sister) was awarded a music CD for scoring the highest in a Sunday School test in First Church. That CD was *Instrumental Praise Majesty: Piano and Flute*, but I cannot find the appropriate tracks on YouTube.

Classical Praise, Volume 3 too has great instrumentals. I started listening to the abovementioned covers only recently, they are easy on the ears and can lift one's spirit.

Other classical praise albums offer pretty solid instrumentals.

How to find: On www.youtube.com, search '**cello piano Arkadiusz Janik**' and click on the playlist '**Classical Praise 3 Piano & Cello (by Arkadiusz Janik)**'. Listen to the recommended tracks.



2. Hokkien songs: Kan Gua Eh Chiu by Lim Gee Tiong



耶穌知影我的心

These songs are easy to learn. If you are thinking of how you could communicate in Hokkien to your granny, or grandpa, and remind them about God, these songs are good choices.

How to find: On www.youtube.com, search '**Lim Gee Tiong Worship Songs**' and click on the playlist '**Lim Gee Tiong Worship Songs (by Molly Cheng)**'. Listen to the recommended tracks.

IS THIS HOME? TRULY?

>> Chua Lee Yang



Chua Lee Yang is a confessing youth adult in CERC.

There is a popular patriotic song in Singapore, one that is universally recollected by most Singaporeans. It is ubiquitous enough, learned by schoolchildren in English and Mandarin, played in airport arrival halls, sung on route marches as in fact being the only National Day tune that everyone can remember the lyrics to. And with National Day season approaching, we will soon hear one version or another make its rounds on the radio and social media:

This is home, truly, where I know I must be

Where my dreams wait for me, where the river always flows

For Christians, these lines do not tell the whole story—Singapore is not our only home. Temptations to confuse this material earth with Heaven as our true home abound every which way we turn. The Psalmist puts it without a shadow of doubt in Psalm 84:2-3,

“My soul longeth, even fainteth for the courts of the LORD: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.

Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, even thine altars, O LORD of hosts, my King and my God.”

In the Old Testament days, the house of the LORD was the tabernacle and physical temple. But even here, what the Psalmist describes are not only the things themselves, though they are precious as earthly pictures of Heaven, but also the presence of the living God. He feels acutely the absence of God in his sojourn in this evil, fallen creation. Like a nest is to the sparrow,

so the house of God is to the believer who longs for home.

However, as earthly pilgrims, we do dwell for the time being in earthly lands. For most of us, Singapore is where we live out our days growing up, going to church, working, and raising Covenant families.

In Singapore, we have been deeply blessed to worship Jehovah in such an era of earthly peace and prosperity. In the past half-century of independence, God has given the country wise earthly leadership, and peace from wars and conflict. As Christians, we face little persecution in the lively preaching of the true Gospel of Jesus Christ. God has thus far sheltered our 50 by 26 kilometre island nation from the catastrophic judgements of recent years throughout the world—of which we merely hear in the news and tend to quickly forget. We have a robust system of law and order which is free from corruption. Hunger is virtually unknown.

As citizens of Singapore, we have many reasons to celebrate our nation and its 49th anniversary. And we even can—no, must—be patriotic. But what is patriotism? Is it draping a flag outside the window? Is it “My country: right or wrong”? What does true patriotism look like for pilgrims on this earth?

As with all other areas of earthly life, Scripture gives us clear and detailed direction. Patriotism is not love for one’s country because that is where he is born and where his family or possessions are. Patriotism is not loyalty to country at the expense of other countries. Neither is it rebelling when the authorities make decisions

that we think are bad for the country. In Romans 13, we are instructed that “the powers that be are ordained of God” and that failure to submit to earthly rulers is a failure to submit to God. We are to obey our rulers in the Lord. By being obedient subjects, we really are being obedient to Christ, who by His power governs all things. In being good earthly subjects by Biblical standards, we obey the fifth Commandment to submit to all in authority over us.

But what if our rulers are unconscionable, or lead the nation in gross sins? What if the laws of the land are in clear objection to the laws of Scripture? What shall be our conduct then? Scripture’s answer is plain: even here also, we are called to submit, although submission is not always obeying. As Peter and John showed, we are first subjects of Christ: when the magistrates demand of us that which is contrary to Scripture, we must “obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29).

Yet in refusing to obey, we must still submit to those in authority. Even when refusing to obey the authorities because we would rather keep God’s Commandments, we humbly submit to the resulting persecution and suffering—see Daniel and his three friends in Babylon. We do not rebel, or even speak evil of our rulers. We are even told to pray for them (1 Timothy 2:2).

For us in CERC, this is confessional. Article 36 of the Belgic Confession states that “it is the bounden duty of every one, of what state, quality, or condition soever he may be, to

subject himself to the magistrates, to pay tribute, to show due honour and respect to them, and to obey them in all things which are not repugnant to the Word of God, to supplicate for them in their prayers, that God may rule and guide them in all their ways, and that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. Wherefore we detest the Anabaptists and other seditious people, and in general all those who reject the higher powers and magistrates, and would subvert justice, introduce a community of goods, and confound that decency and good order which God hath established among men.”

In being patriotic, we honour and defend the authority of our earthly rulers. We point out their errors when they contradict the laws of God. When we must, we refuse to obey, but always in submission, bearing reproach, never rebelling or seeking to overthrow those in power. We also love them for Christ’s sake, and are thankful for them. In doing all these things, measuring ourselves by Biblical standards, only a Christian is truly patriotic.

Is this home, truly? We sojourn on earth for a time, but may we never forget our most important citizenship in Heaven, where Christ reigns as King.

Heaven is home—truly.

“And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.

In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner

of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him:

And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.

And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.”

Revelation 22:1-5

“

Heaven
is
home—truly.

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Psalms 128:2

>> Elder Gim Theng



Wee Gim Theng is an Elder in CERC. He is the husband of Patricia and their family is blessed with 4 children.

Have you ever spent hours on a task, at the end of which you are rewarded by being able to enjoy the outcome of your work? Or maybe you have spent a long time in the kitchen preparing a delicious meal and when you are finished with your preparation, you are rewarded with being able to sit down and enjoy the meal with your loved ones.

This is what Psalm 128:2 alludes to when it says that 'Thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands: happy shall thou be and it shall be well with thee'. Everyone who is God fearing, everyone who walks in God's ways (v. 1) is promised that he shall enjoy the fruits of his labour which his hands have wrought and he shall be well. Everyone who fears God and walks in His ways is certainly a godly Christian. He is mindful of Who his holy God is, living a life of reverential fear lest he displeases the God Who loves him. Every aspect of his life is governed by the fear of God and walking in His ways; even his calling as a worker in society.

While God promises the godly the enjoyment of the fruit of his work, He does not promise that it will be

easy work. There is no promise that it will be a life of ease without pain or trouble. In fact, the godly has to labour with his own hands. To labour with one's own hands has the connotation of one toiling with one's hands like a labourer or farmer. Due to the curse God pronounced on man after the fall, men (including Christians) have to labour and 'in the sweat of his face he shall eat bread' (Gen 3:19). In today's context, we may not be labourers or farmers, having to toil in the fields, but we still have to labour in this sin-cursed world. We work together with sinners like ourselves and sinners unlike ourselves who are non-Christians. We have difficult bosses or superiors or even colleagues who make our work unpleasant. We have unreasonable deadlines or targets to meet or fulfil and tremendous stress to cope with at work. While the advent of the Internet has made our work easier and more efficient, it has also added much duress to our work with shortened lead times and tight deadlines. Often, we have to labour and spend thankless hours in our offices and our work never seems to end. You must have heard of the saying that our work is never done. After we finish one assignment, there is another waiting in line for us. There will always be work to perform no matter how hard we try to finish the previous task. When we go on a vacation, we have to work hard before our vacation to 'clear our work' and when we return from vacation, there is always a pile of work waiting for us. While we are vacationing, we may have to remain contactable due to some 'urgent' tasks. And very

often, we may even have to bring our laptop with us so that we will not hinder the flow of work. No thanks to the inventions of the Internet and WWW! Such is the kind of stressful lives many of us are living. Despite all these, as Christian workers, we are thankful to God for the promise in Psalm 128:2 and other passages in Scripture. We are blessed to enjoy the labours of our hands. Implied in this blessing is the blessedness of having work to perform. Idleness is not good for us! (Prov 19:15, 19:24, 21:25, 31:27; Ecc 10:18; Eze 16:49; 1Tim 5:13). Slothfulness is not a virtue for a Christian. It is a shameful witness. Let not even one of us be labelled as a sloth or be guilty of a poor attitude in our places of work!

We are not only able to enjoy the fruit of our rewards in happiness and great satisfaction, the promise is also that 'it shall be well with thee'. The meaning is that whatever befalls us will turn out for good. I can personally testify of how God has been so good to me in my labours and often in seemingly impossible and unsolvable situations, He never fails to deliver me out of the tight situations after much prayer and trust in Him. God be praised! God's help and guidance will ensure the good completion of our labours and all things shall work for our good in our labours. God shall grant us the strength and grace to perform our labours so that it shall turn out for our good.

These are all the sure promises of God for those who labour in His fear and walk in His ways.

As Christians, what kind of attitude

should we have in our work? As Christians, we are to work hard and to work diligently. We must embrace and practise good Christian work ethics of hard work, diligence, obedience, commitment, reliability, honesty and integrity in our labours. If there is one who shines with good work ethics at work, it has to be the Christian. But as Christians, we have a different calling at work. While we are to obey our masters (bosses & superiors), we must not be men pleasers (Eph 6:5 – 8; Col 3:22 – 24). We must remember that we are first the servants of Christ doing God's will from our heart. We work with singleness of heart i.e. as much as we are able to, fearing God. We must please God when at work, always doing our best. We do not work to please our bosses. Hence, if there are tasks given that are contrary

to God's word, we have to decline doing them.

Sometimes, we may be given an unpleasant task to do. We are not to perform the task with a poor attitude and with a sour look on our face. The word of God tells us that we are to do them unto God and not unto man. Even in such trying circumstances at work, as Christians, we must persevere and do the work heartily as unto the Lord. We must always remember that in all our labours, we serve our Lord Jesus Christ. Christians are to be exemplary workers. We also have to be a good witness for the Lord at work. We must not shame the Name of God at work because of our slothfulness and bad attitude. This will bring God's name into disrepute.

Another point worth mentioning is

that while we are to work hard, we are not to 'sell our bodies and souls' to work. This is a common challenge for many of us working in Singapore. The demands of work are unending. Very often, it even encroaches on our family and church lives. We end up not having time for our families and time to serve the Lord in the church. It may even be detrimental to our spiritual lives and calling as Christians. We must therefore be vigilant not to be sucked voluntarily or involuntarily into this situation. This is where we have to draw a line, even if it means that we have to forego a pay rise, a promotion opportunity or even lose our jobs. Compromising and giving up our spiritual well-being and that of our families and the church is definitely an unwise thing to do. It is not walking in the fear of the Lord.

PUBLIC CONFESSON OF FAITH

>> Aaron Lim



Aaron Lim is a confessing young adult in CERC. He has been studying in the Protestant Reformed Seminary since August.

In this series of articles, we have treated the nature of public confession of faith and each of the three questions that are posed to the young person. The young person making confession of faith vows before God and His church to be faithful in his confession and life as he takes up active membership in the church. In this final article, I hope to explain what faithful membership in the church means and why it is so necessary to maintain membership in the true church.

My views on public confession of faith and church membership would not have been complete without the two books written by Prof. David Engelsma on this subject - *Bound to Join* (2010) and *A Defense of the Church*

Institute (2012). The instruction from these books are based on Articles 27 to 29 of our Belgic Confession. In the first book, Prof. Engelsma uses these articles to explain the Reformed position on church membership, while also drawing much instruction from the reformer John Calvin. Calvin's theology not only influenced the writing of the Belgic Confession, but the reformer himself had much to say concerning church membership. In the second book, Prof. Engelsma answers the critics who deny the necessity of membership in the true church institute. The Reformed church has always taught the necessity of membership in the true church and held it in high esteem. Accordingly,

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The young person also knows that membership in the true church is costly. It requires great self-denial.

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these two books are invaluable for Reformed young people preparing to make their public confession of faith.

Faithfulness to God is manifested in the young person's active membership in the church. He recognizes that this church wherein he is a member of is the true church of Jesus Christ. This is the church where the three marks of the true church are most clearly manifested. There is the pure preaching of the gospel, the faithful administration of the sacraments, and the faithful exercise of Christian discipline (Belgic Confession Article 29). As long as these marks are present in the church, Jesus Christ is present in the church.

Jesus Christ uses the three marks as means of grace for the Salvation of His people. They are fed and nourished by the spiritual food that comes from the preaching and sacraments. Their faith is strengthened through the faithful reception of the sacraments. When they walk in sin and error, Jesus Christ uses his faithful office-bearers to discipline them and to bring them back to the way of the truth.

Recognizing the blood-bought church of Jesus Christ, the young person exercises all his gifts for the good of the church. He takes up an active role in the church, using his God-given abilities to serve her in whatever capacity he can. He desires to spend

and be spent for the church (2 Cor 12:15). He purposes, in the words of the Belgic Confession, to serve the “edification of the brethren, according to the talents God has given” him (Article 28).

Membership in the true church is precious to the young person making confession of faith. He knows that God is the one who has placed him in the church by sovereign grace. God has called him out of the darkness of this world into the light of His Covenant and fellowship. By nature, the young person is totally depraved and belongs to the world, lost in sin and under the curse of God. But God has separated him from the world and given to him a place in the church, where he receives the revelation of God's truth, is instructed by it, and strives to live according to it. The basis for the young person's membership in the church is Jesus Christ, who sacrificed himself on the cross to redeem His people, the Church. By His sacrifice the church is now united to Him. They are His body and He is the Head of the church.

The young person also knows that membership in the true church is costly. It requires great self-denial. By joining the true church, the young person renounces the world and all its pleasures. He renounces all that stands in opposition to God. He confesses only one Master in his life—the Lord Jesus Christ. And so he governs his life according to the will of his only Master. All his earthly endeavours serve the glory of his Master. The education that he pursues, the career that he establishes, and the person that he marries and establishes a home with are all in accordance to the will of his Master.

So important is membership in the true church that our Reformed fathers emphasised it at the cost of one's life. They maintained that “it is the duty of all believers” to join the true church even though “they should suffer death

or any other corporal punishment” (Belgic Confession Article 28). They saw membership in the true church as necessary for Salvation.

Maintaining membership in the true church is an important obligation for the Reformed believer. It is in that church that he marries, establishes his Covenant home, and raises up Covenant seed according to the Reformed faith. When he leaves the church, the young person not only breaks the vow that he made at his confession of faith, but he also brings great spiritual harm to his Covenant generations. His children will not receive the pure preaching of the Gospel, nor receive the sacraments faithfully, nor receive faithful Christian discipline. God judges the sin of the fathers upon the children. Although a father may leave the true church and still claim to be Reformed, the consequences are nevertheless experienced in his succeeding generations. They grow up without the truth and are destroyed for lack of knowledge.

There are increasing trends in the church world today where believers join and leave the church simply at their whim and fancy. They join a church that appeals to them, perhaps where the preaching excites them, or where the fellowship of the church is warm and casual. Perhaps the discipline in the church is not so strict, where members are allowed to believe whatever they like and live their lives as they please. Such churches are appealing to the carnal man in us because these are things that appeal to our carnal natures.

But the Reformed believer insists on membership in the true church because in that church Jesus Christ is King. At the root of maintaining membership in the true church is the truth of Jesus Christ. Where the truth is taught in the church, Jesus Christ is present in the church. Prof. Engelsma writes, “Every believer must insist on

the truth in his or her congregation and in his or her denomination. This is not unreasonable. This is what God insists on.”

When we make public confession of faith in this particular church, we are confessing that the pure truth is taught in this particular church. Thus, we are fulfilling “the calling of every Reformed Christian to be a member of that church that

fully and most purely maintains all aspects of the Reformed faith and life, as thoroughly as described in the Reformed confessions, or to work for the establishment of such a church. The main question is not, What is the false church? Rather, the main question is, Where is the true church, fully in obvious accord with the truth set forth in the Reformed confessions? That is, Am I a member of a church

that is Reformed in doctrine—*all* of Reformed doctrine; Reformed in government; Reformed in discipline; Reformed in worship; and Reformed in the life of the members?”

Public confession of faith and membership in the true church of Jesus Christ is a priceless gift to the young person. By God’s grace, he will be faithful to maintain his membership in the true church. No sacrifice is too great for that membership.

What is Reformed? Reformed Worship IV

>> Prof. Hanko



Prof. Hanko is a retired professor of the PR Theological School. His present work consists of preaching at Hope Protestant Reformed Church, and writing for the Salt Shakers magazine, a forum for the young people in Singapore, and new books. He has visited Singapore on many occasions and is like a grandfather to all the youths here.

In the last issue of *Salt Shakers* I brought up the important text in John 4:24 and talked a bit about the context of Jesus’ conversation with the Samaritan woman. John 4:24 reads: “God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.”

The **place** where one worships is not important – as it was in the old dispensation. What is important is

how we worship. And **how** we worship is determined by **whom** we worship.

Who God is; what God does; what kind of a God He is – when we worship God, our worship is determined by our answers to these questions. If the god we worship is an idol, we might have to scream loudly to be heard, as the prophets and priests did on Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18:26-28). We might have to cut ourselves with knives, or pierce our bodies with long needles, or walk on nails pointed upward to attract the attention of that god; or we might have to force ourselves to suffer pain in the hopes that making ourselves suffer will persuade our god to hear us. But this god is only a stone, a block of wood, or a carved piece of marble—or whatever.

But the God whom we worship is not like such an idol. Jesus says in John 4:24, “God is a spirit.” I have to appeal to the Greek here, the language in which the New Testament was written. More literally, the text does not read “a spirit”, but just “spirit”: “God is spirit.” He is a spiritual being.

But the word “spirit” must be properly understood. It does not mean: “God is the Holy Spirit.” The Holy Spirit is one of the three persons of the holy trinity, and here Jesus is referring to the triune God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Nor does Jesus mean that God is a spiritual being, like the angels, or like heavenly things, or even like our souls, which we cannot see nor can any surgeon find even if he would cut us up into the smallest pieces. That would be saying that God is not material like people and stars; all of which are material and are made of “stuff” which can be handled, seen, measured, weighed, or taken apart—no, Jesus does not mean that.

Jesus means to say, God is spirit unlike anything God has created. He is different from all he has created. No creature, whether it is angel or human or devil can see God. He is higher than any creature, above every creature, because He created every creature. Even in Heaven we will not see God himself (1 Timothy 1:17), but only Jesus Christ; and we will see God revealed in Jesus Christ, who

is “true God of true God” – as the Nicene Creed puts it.

We are to worship Him therefore, as spirit, that is, in harmony with His own infinite being. We are to worship Him in a spiritual way. Idols are made of gold and silver, wood and stone. We may not worship Him as we would worship idols. Nor may we worship Him **by using idols**. We may not worship Him by using crosses, or images, or icons, or “sacred” objects, or beads, such as are in a rosary. When Israel worshipped a golden calf at Mount Sinai, Israel said that they were worshipping the true God by means of the golden calf. But Moses killed them all according to the judgement of God.

God has created us so that we can worship Him as “spirit”. He created us with a body, with a soul and with a spirit (Ecclesiastes 12:7, 1 Thessalonians 5:23). The spirit in man makes it possible for a man to come to God, be aware of God, and stand in a relation to God. The wicked have spirits as well as we. They know God, know that they must worship Him, and know that they will be punished if they do not worship Him. But because they are totally depraved, they deny God anyway and shake their fists in God’s face.

But God’s people know God as their Saviour, their Redeemer, and their Father in Heaven. They stand, by grace, in a relationship to God that is like a man and his bride who are just married, like a father and his children, and like a master and his servants. So all God’s people have to do to worship is to think of themselves as in God’s dwelling place and think of God Himself as on the throne of the universe, and believe that He is their God. That is all they have to do to worship God. It doesn’t help to take a calf along to sacrifice; it doesn’t help to come with beads on a rosary; it doesn’t help to bow before an idol; all these things destroy worship. It just takes

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We are in church to be carried on the wings of worship into God’s presence and to worship Him: to praise Him, to adore Him, to bless Him.

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faith, as Hebrews 11 says, “Without faith it is impossible to please him, for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”

Our faith is in the Scriptures in which God tells us who He is and what kind of a God He is. And so, wherever we are or whatever we are doing, when we empty our thoughts of everything but God and what Scripture says about Him, and come in this way into His presence, we worship. We worship when we fill our minds with God in church, but also at home, when we are studying, when we are driving down the road, when we are visiting a beautiful park, everywhere...

We must worship Him in truth, Jesus says. That is, because all truth is found in the Bible, we worship Him by confessing about Him what the Bible tells us about Him and about what He does.

We can worship Him at home, at school, while walking—whatever we may be doing. If we were without sin, we also would worship Him when playing soccer and writing a paper that is demanded by our teacher. But we are too sinful to do that, and so we must be very careful to set aside times when we do worship.

Church is such a time, and to worship God in church is special. It is special because: first, we hear God speak to us through the preacher (when we are conscious of being in God’s presence); and second, because we are with God’s

people in our congregation, which is the closest we can come to Heaven while we are here on earth. In church we are with a few of God’s people, while in Heaven we will be with them all. In church, Christ is with us in a special way by His Word and spirit: “Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there will I be in the midst of them” (Matthew 18:20). To be in church here on earth is sort of like a foretaste of Heaven. One day, in Heaven, we shall be with the whole Church, a multitude more in number than the stars or the sand on the seashore.

So, when we worship in church, we are not there, in the first place, for our own benefit. We do not ask ourselves, “What can I get out of this? Was I edified and blessed? Did I get a thrill about being in church? Were my emotions roused?” That is selfish, self-centred, hypocrisy that God hates. We are in church to be carried on the wings of worship into God’s presence and to worship Him: to praise Him, to adore Him, to bless Him. “Enter into his gates with thanksgiving and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him and bless his name (Psalm 100:4).

When we are in Heaven in our thoughts and desires, and are there to bless God. Then, we can also bring our needs, our sorrows, our worries, our burdens, and our temptations in the confidence that He will hear us.

That is worship.

Are There Miracles Today?

>> Cornelius Boon



Cornelius is a confessing young adult in CERC. He actively serves in the youth committee [Covenant Keepers/ Covenant Keepers (Senior)].

The word “miracle” is used so often in today’s context that the child of God might have difficulty in understanding what that word really means from a Christian point of view. On the streets, we might overhear someone saying that it was a miracle that he got to work on time because the traffic was so bad; or a student might say that it was a miracle that he got such good grades for the test even though he did not study for it. Wikipedia has this definition of what a miracle is: “A miracle is an event not ascribable to human power or the laws of nature and consequently attributed to a supernatural, especially divine, agency.”

The word “miracle” has been defined by the world as supernatural (above nature or outside the laws of nature) works of a divine being. We know that this divine being is God, but does this definition give us a complete picture of what miracles really are?

Rev. Hoeksema writes in Reformed

Dogmatics as follows (Volume 1, Anthropology, Locus II):

“Several words are used to express our idea of a miracle. There is first of all the Hebrew term PELE’, from the verb PALA’, which means “to separate, to distinguish, to make distinguished, to make wonderful, extraordinary.” A miracle, therefore, is a work of God that strikes the attention by being extraordinary. This corresponds to the Greek word thauma, a marvelous work. Of course, all the works of God are marvels, whether we see a sunset or the raising of the dead: but our senses are so dulled that our special attention must be aroused to behold them as the works of the Almighty.”

What is interesting is that the idea of miracles is closely tied to the idea of God’s providence. The sun rising and setting every day is as much a miracle as when Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. So what is the providence of God?

“It is the all-comprehensive and almighty power of God whereby He sustains and governs all things with a view to the realisation of that purpose which the Lord has sovereignly willed and set before Himself from before the foundation of the world. This providence of God affects and controls the life of every living creature and every phase of life of each creature throughout the universe.” – God’s Providence and the Miracle, Veldman Herman

We see that miracles are fundamentally the providence of God. To say that a miracle is separate from the providence of God is Deism. Deism is the heresy which advocates that God created this world and then left the world to run by itself. God is in control of all things and that is why a definition which only ascribes supernatural events to God is not a good definition. God’s hand is over all of creation, and the “laws of nature” that man speaks of are just the Lord’s orderly control over all things, for nature never operates by itself. But for the sake of this article, we will refer to miracles as the works of God which strike our attention by being extraordinary.

Miracles in the Past

The whole of scripture is filled with many miracles and we Reformed Christians believe all of them. These include miracles in the Old Testament like Noah and the flood, the ten plagues, the parting of the red sea, God supplying the people of Israel with manna, when Joshua asked God to stop the sun, the falling of the walls of Jericho, Daniel in the lion’s den, the three men who were thrown into the fiery furnace and Jonah in the belly of the fish. We also remember miracles in the New Testament performed by Jesus when He turned water into wine, walked on water, cast out devils like Legion, fed the five thousand, raised Lazarus from the dead, and most of all, the miracle of His death and resurrection.

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This providence of God affects and controls the life of every living creature and every phase of life of each creature throughout the universe.

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It is by faith that we believe what is plainly written in Scripture. We can even say that believing in miracles is essential in the faith of the child of God. In fact believing in miracles is important for the salvation of the believer, because all these miracles point to Christ. His death and resurrection was THE miracle that all others pointed to. The Apostles were granted the power to perform miracles so that they would be able to confirm Christ's work on the cross.

And it is for this reason that the miracles of Scripture are constantly being attacked by the world. Because the world hates Christ, they come up with ways to deny Christ the glory. They deny the virgin birth of Christ, His resurrection from the dead, and His final coming. Not only that, they try to use science to explain the miracles that are clearly stated in Scripture. Theistic evolution is nothing but evolution repackaged to try to deny God the glory of Creation. Higher criticism tries to discredit the Bible by saying that not all of Scripture is true, and that the miracles recorded in Scripture are nothing but myths.

The child of God must stand against the tide of unbelief; he must hold fast and continue in the things which he has learned and has been assured of. For denying even a single miracle of

Scripture is a denial all of the miracles, and that is a denial of Christ. By faith we hold fast to what has been recorded in Scripture, and despite what the world may say, with all its technology and sciences, with all its philosophy and schools of thought, we confess with all our hearts that we believe in the miracles of Scripture. And, is not that a miracle in itself?

Miracles Today

Scripture teaches that during the time of the Apostles, miracles were part of the life and ministry of the Church. What about today? Is the gift of performing miracles still found in the Church today? Pentecostal doctrine says that these gifts can be still found in the Church today and that is the reason why they practise faith healings, speaking in tongues and have so-called miracle workers.

What they ignore is that Scripture clearly teaches that miracles were “signs of an apostle”. 1 Corinthians 12:12 reads, “Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds.” The power to perform miracles was attached to the Apostolic office and it served the purpose to confirm that the Apostles were special servants of Christ and that they preached the true Gospel of God. Miracles were the credentials of

the Apostles.

Why was it necessary for the apostles to perform miracles during the Apostolic age? It was because of their unique labour. They were to lay the foundation of the New Testament Church of Christ. Paul writes in Ephesians 2:20b that they “are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets.” They were the foundation not because of themselves, but rather because of the Word that they preached, the Word is that is Christ. Even in the Apostolic age, neither miracles nor extraordinary gifts were the main thing. But rather, the preaching and proclamation of the Word was central because that was the means of salvation. Miracles were secondary, and were subservient to the Gospel that was preached. We see that clearly taught in Hebrews 2:3-4 “How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?”

The Apostolic office was not a permanent office, but a temporary one. The qualifications of an Apostle tell us this, because an Apostle had to be called and commissioned by Christ directly. He had to receive the Gospel from Jesus Himself. Apostle Paul says in 1 Corinthians 9:1 “Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Are not ye my work in the Lord?” The task of the Apostle also indicated the temporary nature of the office. This task was to lay the foundation and there comes a time when the work of laying the foundation is done. This is when

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The child of God must stand against the tide of unbelief; he must hold fast and continue in the things which he has learned and has been assured of.

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the calling is given by the Church to pastors and teachers to build on that foundation.

So if the office of the Apostle has disappeared, likewise the miracles that confirmed the office have also disappeared. And for those who insist on miracles today, they must also produce apostles. Beware of false prophets and miracle workers who will deceive many with their works; even the elect would be deceived, if it were possible. We see this in Matthew 24:24, “For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.”

Do We Believe in Miracles?

The answer is a definite YES. Not only do we believe in miracles in the past, but even today, the child of God

confesses that he believes in miracles. When confronted with the question of whether there are miracles today, he is able to respond with an emphatic “Yes!” This might come as somewhat of a surprise to some, given what has been discussed earlier. But what is needed is a proper understanding and perspective of what miracles are.

As mentioned earlier, the defining miracle of all ages is Christ. He is THE Miracle – His origin, His essence, His words, His works, His hand over all of history. And through Him are other miracles revealed to us. The wonder of salvation and redemption is that while we were dead in sin, Christ died for us. The miracle of grace is worked in our hearts, which gives us the faith to believe.

When I was in the Philippines, a brother said something at the end of a lesson on the Trinity. He commented

that the more he learned about the Trinity, the less he understood about it; yet the more he wanted to believe in it. That is the miracle of faith, the Spirit working in the heart of the believer. We too have experienced this; each and every one of us has had that seed of regeneration planted in our hearts, been given that faith which denies the logic of men, and that believes all the truths of Scripture. How can we say that we do not believe in miracles?

That the truth continues to be faithfully preached in CERC today is another miracle. In fact, it is a miracle in itself that CERC still remains standing despite the controversy of “divorce and remarriage”. That He has given us youths the zeal for His truth, that He has given us parents who care about our spiritual well-being are all miracles of God. God has indeed been good to us and He has given us much to be thankful for. One just has to look around to see the miracles which God has done for us; and the list just goes on and on.

Do I believe in miracles? Yes, I do.

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Not only do we believe in miracles in the past, but even today, the child of God confesses that he believes in miracles.

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The Canonical Sufficiency of Scripture

(Belgic Confession 7a)

>> Pastor Angus Stewart



Pastor Angus Stewart is a minister of the Word at Covenant Protestant Reformed Church in Northern Ireland (www.cprc.co.uk).

Belgic Confession 7: The Sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures to Be the Only Rule of Faith

We believe that those Holy Scriptures fully contain the will of God, and that whatsoever man ought to believe unto salvation is sufficiently taught therein. For, since the whole manner of worship which God requires of us is written in them at large, it is unlawful for any one, though an apostle, to teach otherwise than we are now taught in the Holy Scriptures; nay, though it were an angel from heaven, as the apostle Paul saith. For, since it is forbidden to add unto or take away any thing from the Word of God, it doth thereby evidently appear that the doctrine thereof is most perfect and complete in all respects.

Neither do we consider of equal value any writing of men, however holy these men may have been, with those divine Scriptures, nor ought we to consider custom, or the great multitude, or antiquity, or succession of times and persons, or councils, decrees, or statutes, as of equal value with the truth of God, for the truth is above all; for all men are of themselves liars and more vain than vanity itself. Therefore we reject with all our hearts whatsoever doth not agree with this infallible rule, which the apostles have taught us, saying, Try the spirits whether they are of God. Likewise, if there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house.

Belgic Confession 7 on Scripture's Canonical Sufficiency

The first paragraph of Belgic Confession 7 underscores the sufficiency of the canon of the 66 Old Testament and New Testament books in many ways.

First, consider its adjectives or adjectival phrases: “the whole manner of worship which God requires of us is written in them” and “the doctrine thereof is most perfect and complete in all respects.”

Second, there are its adverbs or adverbial phrases: “[the] Holy Scriptures fully contain the will of God” and “whatsoever man ought to believe unto salvation is sufficiently taught therein” and the whole manner of worship which God requires of us is written in them at large.”

Thus, third, “it is forbidden to add unto” the Word of God. It is unlawful and wicked for any man or angel to do so, even an “apostle” or “an angel from heaven” or the alleged angels, Raphael and Moroni—never mind a demon!

Attacks on Scripture's Canonical Sufficiency

How do different groups add, in various ways, to the 66 inspired books of Holy Scripture, thus denying its canonical sufficiency?

Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy add the Apocrypha to the Word of God. As we saw in our consideration of Belgic Confession 6, Eastern Orthodoxy has even more apocryphal books than Rome. There are also their views of tradition, with Romanism, for example, having more idolatrous traditions on Mary and the Pope. Of these two, the Apocrypha and tradition, it may well be that it is by their tradition that Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy undermine and attack Scripture's sufficiency even more than by their holding to the Apocrypha.

In the days of the early church, there were some (often bizarre) religious groups, such as the Gnostics, who held to the Old Testament pseudepigrapha and/or the New Testament pseudepigrapha. In our own day, the modernist Jesus Seminar in the US, reckons that especially the Gospel of Thomas frequently gives authentic sayings of Jesus not found in Matthew, Mark, Luke or John. The truth is that the 66 books of the Bible, without the pseudepigrapha, are the Word of God.

What about the cults? All of them claim to adhere to the Bible, but do they? The Mormons add The Book of Mormon, The Pearl of Great Price and The Doctrine and Covenants. Christian Science looks to Mary Baker Eddy's Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures. Seventh-Day Adventism has the writings of Ellen White. Though it denies it adds

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For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book. Rev 22:18

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to the Bible, it claims that White was “inspired” and had the “gift of prophecy.” Thus, Seventh-Day Adventism claims to be the church with “the testimony of Jesus Christ” spoken of in Revelation 12:17. The Jehovah's Witnesses do not add another book to the Bible. Instead, they have their own (corrupt) translation of the Bible in the New World Translation. Over against all the cults, including the four major ones just mentioned, the orthodox position is that the 66 books alone are Scripture, without the addition of cultic texts or cultic “translations.”

Liberalism denies the sufficiency of Scripture in many ways. The Big Bang theory and evolutionism establish the way God made the earth, and man, and the age of the earth—not the Word of God (e.g., Gen 1-11; Heb 11:3). Feminism determines that women should be in church office as deacons, elders and ministers, as well as bishops and moderators, contrary to Scripture (1 Cor 14:34-38; 1 Tim 2:9-15). Scripture plus Charles Darwin or Scripture plus Simone de Beauvoir! Likewise, the Bible must yield to philosophy, psychology, sodomy, modern culture, etc., for it is not up-to-date in today's world. God's Word and wisdom must submit to man's words and follies!

Pentecostalism and Charismaticism also deny the sufficiency of Scripture. They hold to direct revelation in the form of “words of knowledge” and on-going prophecy. Some of them even speak of contemporary prophets (!), apostles (!!), super-prophets (!!!) and super-apostles (!!!!), with their “thus saith the Lord”. A softer form of Pentecostalism or Charismaticism is being smuggled into the church in the form of erroneous notions regarding guidance. God supposedly leads people by “feelings” and “promptings”, resulting in people saying that “the Lord told me” to do such and such.

Especially of late, religious syncretists or pluralists are claiming that the various texts of the world's religious are all Scripture. The 66 books of the Christian Bible, Judaism's Tanakh (i.e., the Old Testament), Islam's Koran, Hinduism's Bhagavad Gita, etc., as well as writings from animists, e.g., in Africa and Polynesia, are being lumped together and included in books allegedly containing the world's Scriptures. All are said to reveal something about the rich and unfathomable divine! But God's Word is Genesis to Revelation, without any of the writings of the pagan religions and over against all such idolatrous books.

Explanation of Scripture's Canonical Sufficiency

Now let us draw together various elements from the preceding and explain what the canonical sufficiency of Scripture means.

First, there is no need for any other “inspired” books in addition to the 66 books of the Biblical canon, for they are the rich, full and complete Scriptures. The Apocrypha and pseudepigrapha, The Book of Mormon and other cultic books, and the religious texts of the pagans are not the Word of God.

Second, God does not speak to us or anyone today by direct revelation in dreams or visions, etc. The time for such things passed with the death of the first-century extraordinary office-bearers, the apostles and the prophets, who, under the crucified and risen Christ, laid the “foundation” of the New Testament church (Eph 2:20)—a foundation that no man can add to or relay!

Third, Scripture is its own blessed interpreter. It is not to be explained according to the tradition of the false churches or a supposedly infallible pope. Nor is the Word of God to be interpreted by the cultic writings of Mary Baker Eddy or the fads of modern culture, such as evolutionism or feminism.

Fourth, the sufficiency of Scripture also means that no canonical books of the past have perished and no canonical books will be found in the future. The Old Testament, indeed, refers to “the book of the wars of the LORD” (Num 21:14), “the book of Jasher” (Josh 10:13; 2 Sam 1:18) and other books (e.g., 1 Kings 11:41; 1 Chron 29:29; 2 Chron 9:29; 12:15). The New Testament, for example,

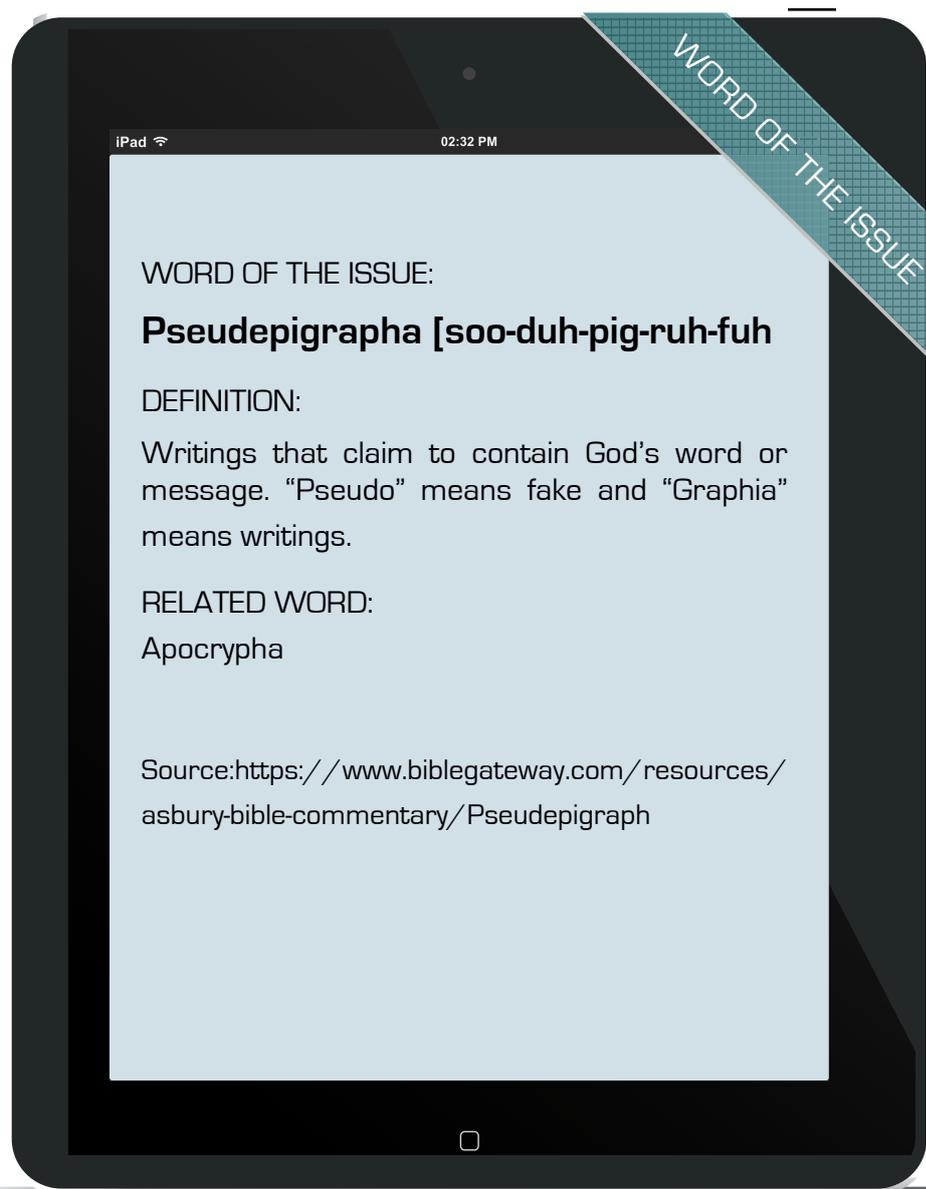
speaks of a letter Paul wrote to the church of Corinth prior to the canonical epistle of 1 Corinthians (1 Cor 5:9), but none of these writings ever were, or were intended to be, parts of the canonical Scriptures.

In short, the Holy Scripture is the 66 books listed in Belgic Confession 4 and not the Apocrypha (Belgic Confession 6), for, in the infinite wisdom of the Triune God, it is perfectly complete and so does not need the addition of other books or on-going revelation. Belgic Confession 7 cites Revelation 22:18, which reads in full, “For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book.” Our

Reformed confession here teaches that this verse forbids adding not only to the book of Revelation (the last book of the Bible), but also to all or any of the books of divine revelation (the preceding 65 books of the Bible).

QUESTIONS

1. Can you list some of the books that the devil has brought forth to “supplement” and/or replace the 66 books of the Bible?
2. Could a Charismatic honestly claim to hold to Belgic Confession 7? If no, why not?
3. Is it possible that a 67th book of the Bible could be discovered by archaeologists (or anyone else) in the Middle East (or anywhere else)?



Lessons from the History of the Beloved Church of Jesus Christ Now Among Us (5b)

>> Pastor Arie den Hartog



Pastor Arie Den Hartog is a minister of the Word at Southwest Protestant Reformed Church in Wyoming, Michigan.

In the midst of many discussions regarding the doctrines mentioned in the previous issue, there also arose an important question in the application of the Truth in the lives of God's people. This truth has to do with the permanency of marriage. Christian marriage is so important for the continuation of the Covenant of God with believers and their children, and for the continuation of God's church among them. Every church, no matter where it is in the world, will be faced with the awful reality of the corruption and destruction of marriage by this ungodly world. This corruption also often enters into the church if she is not on guard. The PRCA earnestly desired for the ERCS to stand with her on this practical question of such great importance—both for her future and for the good of the families in the church.

The discussion regarding marriage was a difficult one for ERCS. She had to face questions regarding this truth directly for the first time when some marriages in her midst were in

trouble. Trouble in marriage effects the relationships between those who are married in deeply personal ways. This struggle often causes very deep and bitter feelings. Children of troubled marriages are inevitably seriously affected. The leaders of ERCS were faced with the urgent calling to carefully study the teaching of God's Word regarding marriage. God's Word clearly condemns the treachery of divorce when a man or woman puts away their partner. The particular question that became the source of most of the debate was whether the innocent party should be allowed to remarry after a divorce. Scripture teaches that such persons should remain single or be reconciled to their God-given partners.

The PRCA taught in the ERCS that marriage is by God intended to be a life-long bond of faithfulness and love. For this reason divorce is forbidden by God. In the case of on-going adultery on the part of a spouse who does not repent, a Christian may put away their unfaithful spouse. This 'putting away', however, does not dissolve the marriage bond in the sight of God. Scripture teaches that only God establishes the marriage bond, and only God dissolves this bond at the death of one or both partners in the marriage. As long as the spouse of a man or woman is alive, both parties of a broken marriage must remain single. This is the clear teaching of Romans 7:1-3 and even more particularly of



Every church, no matter where it is in the world, will be faced with the awful reality of the corruption and destruction of marriage by this ungodly world. ”

1 Corinthians 7:11. God established His own strong law for the good of marriage in the church. Furthermore, this truth of marriage is important because God designed marriage to be a picture of the lifelong faithfulness and love of Christ for His church and of the faithfulness of God in maintaining His Covenant of grace with His people.

In the above mentioned controversies, missionaries and ministers of the PRCA which laboured among the congregations of the ERCS tried, with patient and long-suffering care, to give leadership in the ERCS and to encourage her to be steadfast to the truth of the Lord committed to her. There was recognition that ERCS was a new and young denomination in need of growing in her knowledge of the truth and for deepening her commitment to the Reformed Faith

in many ways.

The controversy on marriage continued for years in the ERCS. Lengthy studies were made. Brethren were divided from each other, because of stands they took. Appeal was made to many who did not agree with the instruction given by the PRCA in the ERCS. No clear settled position was taken by the leaders of ERCS for a long time. Sadly, this controversy led to the break up between the two congregations of ERCS and also of the breaking of the sister-church relationship between ERCS and the PRCA.

When positions regarding the truth of God divide the church, God will be the judge. To divide the church over non-essentials is a grievous sin. Sometimes truths involved in controversy are so serious that there must be separation and reformation. Divisions regarding the truth are always very painful. There were those in the ERCS who in these controversies became convinced that they did not want to continue in the direction presented by men from the PRCA. The direction was considered too narrow, and there arose a desire instead to have closer fellowship with other churches. There was a strong desire on the part of some of the leaders to be more broad-minded and open in tolerating different doctrinal teachings in the church that came from several different denominations which often came through new members who joined the ERCS over the years.

We are thankful to God that the leaders of Covenant took a stand even though this meant serious disagreement with brethren. We are thankful to God for the labours of Prof. Herman Hanko and his wife during the days

of controversy. He helped CERC to understand the controversies that troubled ERCS and to lead the leaders of CERC to take a stand for the truth. We are thankful for the growth in the knowledge and love of the truth which Covenant Church has experienced in the recent years of her history.

Through the history of the denomination called "ERCS" there have been many that have for a time been members and then after several years left again. Each of us must consider where they are at presently? Are we being faithful to the truth in all areas of our lives? For the members of CERC we have the ongoing challenge, is the beloved church that we belong to maintaining and defending the truth of God for His glory and the spiritual welfare of her members? Are we interested not only in our own personal spiritual lives, but also in standing together in the faith in the midst of a faithful church of Jesus Christ?

I make these practical concluding remarks. In order for the church to remain faithful to the Lord, her

members must by the grace of God always maintain their first love for the Lord and for His truth. They must be zealous and faithful to continue in their own personal study of the Word of God that they might be able through clear and spiritual understanding and necessary discernment stand for the truth in love for the future of the church and the generations of the covenant. They must resist all temptation to make other things in their lives such as pursuing an earthly career, or the love for riches and glory in this present world the chief concern of their lives. We must be ready to make great personal sacrifices for the truths sake. Remember the many martyrs in the history of the church who counted not their own lives dear to themselves. The leaders of the church have a great responsibility. They themselves must study continually to grown deeper and deeper in the knowledge of the truth. They must discern the truth from false teaching and lead the members of the church in the way of His truth. As members of the church we must continually pray for our leaders. May God help us all and by His mercy keep us faithful to Him.



When positions regarding the truth of God divide the church, God will be the judge. To divide the church over non-essentials is a grievous sin.



Should a Christian Be Entertained By K-Pop?

>> Cheryl and Bernice Lim

Cheryl Lim is a confessing young adult in CERC and *Bernice*, her sister, is a confessing youth. Cheryl serves in the Christian Literature Ministry, while Bernice serves in Covenant Keepers (CERC's youth group).

The “Korean Wave” = [hallyu 한류 in Korean]

Since the late 1990s, South Korean culture has steadily gained popularity in Asian markets, and in recent years, even made inroads into Western nations. This surge in the international visibility of Korean culture—the “Korean Wave”—has been termed “Hallyu”. This wave consists primarily of two media forms, pop music (K-pop) and televised serial dramas (K-drama). Of focus in this article is the issue of whether K-pop is a legitimate form of entertainment for the Christian.

K-pop is a fusion of synchronised dance routines, fashionable outfits and various musical elements such as disco, rock and hip-hop. Singers are systematically trained from as young as 9 or 10, before the best are selected to debut at around 18 years of age. Singers frequently perform in bands consisting of three or more members, thrilling the crowds with their sharp moves, switching positions while singing, and dancing in perfect harmony.

This article, in contrast with the typical prose structure, has been written as a

mock dialogue between an advocator of K-pop and one who uses Scripture to point out the spiritual dangers of this entertainment form.

B: Hey! Have you seen the latest K-pop music video by Girls’ Generation called “Mr.Mr.”? It’s so good, you won’t believe it!

C: Umm... No, why would I want to watch that?

B: Are you kidding? It’s the hottest video on YouTube right now with almost sixteen million views! Everyone’s talking about it. Their dance moves are full of energy and vigour. And all nine of them are such hot girls with good figures.

C: Isn’t this a real source of temptation for a Christian? Focusing on the external frequently leads to covetousness and discontentment. It makes us desire such good looks and promotes vanity. Did you know that most of these Korean stars undergo cosmetic surgeries merely to enhance their appearance? How does that compare with the Apostle Paul’s instruction in 1 Tim 2:9 “In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array” (see also 1 Pet 3:3,4)? For many, the threat of adultery is also very real. Remember Christ’s admonition? “...That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her

hath committed adultery with her already in his heart” (Matt 5:28).

B: Seriously? Aren’t you overreacting? It’s really not that bad. I just find them hot, that’s all. I also admire them because of their capabilities. They are extremely talented for their age and there aren’t many of such calibre, you know?

C: Well, what starts off as mere “puppy love” or admiration may quickly turn into idolising. And then you may find these boys threatening God’s place upon the throne of your heart. As a matter of fact, these K-pop singers are known as “idols”. Telling, isn’t it? I think we’d do well to take heed to Scripture’s exhortation, “Flee also youthful lusts” (2 Tim 2:22a), and “Abstain from all appearance of evil” (1 Th 5:22).

B: Actually, I think most of them make pretty good role models anyway. Their dressing is decent for the most part and they don’t reveal much flesh. These stars also take the utmost care to keep themselves scandal-free. They shun away from anything that may lead to the tiniest hint of rumour or gossip, watching what they do and thinking before they speak. Members from some K-pop groups even attend church! How rare is that in such communities? In addition, many of them try to avoid dating until a much later phase in their lives. They do not wish to disappoint their thousands of fans from all around the world or risk

being perceived as bad examples to the younger audience. Such dedication and focus! Aren't they worth learning from?

C: Oh yes, they sure do well in presenting to the world a false sense of morality, innocence, and righteousness. But let's ask ourselves: Do these "good works" proceed from a true faith? Are they performed according to the Law of God and to His glory? (Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 91) Or are they done to protect one's career and image? Moreover, as we recently learned from the preaching, we ought to be imitators and followers of God (Eph 5:1)! Not K-pop idols. This also means that we emulate fellow saints who live out of the life of Christ, walking in love and putting away the unfruitful works of darkness.

Still worse yet - some of their seemingly noble actions are in direct contradiction to the teachings of Scripture. Avoid dating, you say? Doesn't this set off your Reformed antennas? As Covenant conscious young people, shouldn't we submit to God's will if His desire for us is to marry, bear children and set up godly Christian homes? And if God is to unite us with another in holy marriage, we should look forward to dating as preparation for it.

B: Okay, fine. What if I just use K-pop to lift my spirits when I'm down? The beat and rhythm of the music soothes me and makes me feel so much better. It's almost as though all my problems disappear! K-pop 'transports' me into another world where there are no worries and cares of this life. How amazing is that? And, you know what the best part is? I rarely even understand the lyrics—

so I'm definitely not getting any bad influence there! These songs are so much better than Western pop music which contains a lot of sexually explicit and vulgar language. Wouldn't it be worse if I listened to those kinds of music? I think you should give K-pop a shot and you'll know what I mean!

C: Scripture has no lack of exhortations to be sober (e.g. Tit 1, 2), and understandably so. The world provides countless avenues for getting drunk, not just with wine, but with all of its sinful pleasures. Music, as we are discussing, has a profound effect on us and may frequently cause us to lose proper judgement, control, and self-discipline. Being 'transported into another world' merely provides temporal relief and clouds our estimation of reality. What does the Lord teach us concerning our struggles with sin? "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matt 11:28) And what is the Apostle Paul's remedy for anxiety? "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." (Phil 4:6) True peace is not found in the beat and rhythm of your K-pop music, but in our Comforter.

And while K-pop may seem like a better alternative to certain Western music, a Christian's life is not about choosing the lesser evil or seeking to tread as close as possible to the line of sin without falling over. It is about walking in a way that best glorifies God and seeking to magnify His name at all times.

B: All right, all right. So maybe K-pop isn't the best form of entertainment... But Scripture doesn't explicitly forbid it. So, really, what's so wrong about it?

You are probably just being too strict.

C: Perhaps we should ask: what is right about K-pop, right in the sight of God, and right in my calling as a Christian? Let us approach this from an antithetical position. As God's people in this world, our calling is to say "Yes" to our Covenant God, confess Him as the only good and perform His will in all of our lives. At the same time, we say "No" to all unrighteousness and ungodliness, and all that opposes our God and promotes the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. When we consider K-pop in this light, the matter becomes simple, does it not? It is only when we try to forsake our antithetical position that we begin to justify our indulgence in such entertainment and convince ourselves that there is still some good in it.

B & C: And so, dear reader, what is your response? Will you allow the beats of K-pop to sweep you away on the "Korean wave"? May God grant us grace to live the antithesis.

“

True peace is not found in the beat and rhythm of your K-pop music, but in our Comforter.

”

RUNNING FROM SEXUAL TEMPTATIONS TOWARDS OUR COVENANT GOD

>> Matt Kortus



Matt Kortus is a member of Faith Protestant Reformed Church in Jenson, Michigan. He works as a Research Associate in the Van Andel Institute in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

As believers, we are the “good soldiers of Jesus Christ” (2 Timothy 2:3). As such, we are called upon to “put on the whole armour of God that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil” (Galatians 6:11). We understand well the common analogy that depicts us as soldiers who “fight the good fight of faith” (1 Timothy 6:12). In times of doubt and trouble, we grip tightly the shield of faith; in response to temptation, we wield “the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (Galatians 6:16-17). We stand firmly with God as our rock and our fortress (Psalm 18:2). This is our calling as young Christians.

Yet, in spite of all these passages calling us to fight as soldiers, we must respond very differently when faced with the temptation of sexual desire during courtship. Rather than stand and boldly face the enemy, we are given a simple command:

Run... Run!

Not exactly our idea of courage in the face of temptation. Nevertheless,

God’s Word teaches us to “flee fornication” (1 Corinthians 6:18). Elsewhere, when Scripture forbids fornication, it does so using verbs such as “keep from” (Acts 21:25), “avoid” (1 Corinthians 7:2) “abstain from” (1 Thessalonians 4:3). Nowhere in Scripture do we read: stand and fight against this temptation.

This Scriptural admonition to flee fornication and abstain from fleshly lusts encompasses not only our actions, but also our thoughts. To look on another woman and lust after her equates to committing adultery (Matthew 5:28). Therefore, we are called to abstain ourselves even from such lusts (1 Peter 2:11). Our beloved Heidelberg Catechism summarises this point well by explaining the seventh Commandment to “forbid all unchaste actions, gestures, words, thoughts, desires, and whatever else can entice a man thereto” (Lord’s Day 41, Q&A 109). Thus, we must concern ourselves with “bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” (2 Corinthians 10:5).

With so much emphasis on turning from this temptation to flee in the opposite direction, it may be helpful to understand why this is so important. Sexual desires work on a positive feedback system. Each small stimulus, such as a passionate kiss or illicit thoughts, causes our sexual desire to become more and more inflamed. Rather than leaving us

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Rather than stand and boldly face the enemy, we are given a simple command: Run... Run!

”

satisfied, each stimulus produces in us a greater physiological desire for more. This positive feedback loop explains how a simple kiss goodnight can illicit much more passionate kissing, which can in turn open the door for hands to become involved in ways that are inappropriate. The positive feedback loop teaches how improper thoughts of someone from the opposite sex during the day can make us more likely to click on the advertisement on our computer screen that links us to a webpage filled with scantily clad models when we are alone.

Important in understanding that sexual stimulus only produces greater desires is knowing the only thing that can satisfy this positive feedback loop is engaging in sexual intercourse. By nature, we will never be content until we have gone as far as there is to go. This truth resonates strongly

with any children of God who have been led into breaking the seventh Commandment in its fullest, as they ask themselves afterward, “How did this happen?” It happened when they tried to stand and face sexual temptations rather than running.

This applies especially to those who are in a relationship. Our tendency is to toy with sexual desires. We do so with the mindset that we will know better than to overstep the boundaries. But as we have learned, this does not represent a wise approach to the whole matter.

Briefly, I offer two very practical suggestions: First, we must not place ourselves in compromising situations. As a dating couple, a room all to ourselves when no one else is home in the evening constitutes a compromising situation. Another example: an overnight trip somewhere, even if we have every intention of getting separate rooms. By placing ourselves in such situations, we leave an open door for temptation.

Second, we should find others to hold us accountable. This starts with the dating couple. Young men especially, as future heads of a potential marriage (Ephesians 5), ought to take the lead in this. But beyond your dating partner: we should not be embarrassed to enlist our parents’ help in this matter. Things as simple as a curfew can go a long way. If you come from a family with unbelieving parents, try relying on a close friend to send you text reminders. Accountability can serve us well in avoiding sexual sins.

While these practical suggestions will aid us in our struggle against sexual sin, we must have a proper motivation that will cause us to turn and run from sexual temptations. This

requires a proper understanding of sex itself. As we know from Scripture, sex is reserved for married persons (Hebrews 13:4). In marriage, sex must be viewed as a precious gift from God that allows for an intimate connection with our spouse. That’s the key: sex is an intimate bond of fellowship between married persons. Why?

Scripture teaches that marriage is a picture of the union between Christ and His bride, the Church (Ephesians 5:32). This union is rooted in God’s Covenant of fellowship that He has established with the Church through Christ’s work on the Cross. The Covenant of grace governs every aspect of our lives and permeates the whole of Reformed theology. God instituted marriage in order that believers may have a deeper experiential knowledge of Covenant fellowship. Therefore, to help us understand the intimacy of the Covenant of grace, God gave to married persons the good gift of sex to picture it. Though we often view pro-creation as the reason for sex, the primary reason God created sex is to picture the intimacy of His union with us, the church of Jesus Christ.

Understanding this truth makes intercourse between married persons a privilege and a joy, but it also keeps sex in its proper place. For sex is merely a picture—a dim picture at that. The pleasures of sex last but a few fleeting moments. The reality, which sex pictures, is Covenant fellowship with God! Our Covenant union with God will last for all eternity. Importantly, we do not have to be married to enjoy and experience this blessed Covenant fellowship. Our communion with Jesus Christ precedes all earthly connections, no matter how close. This holds true for those who are married, dating, or single.

This knowledge dictates our response to sexual temptations: we run from them and toward our Covenant Father. That’s right, when faced with sensual desires and fleshly lusts, we do not just turn and run in any random direction, but instead we run deliberately towards God. In doing so, we keep sex in its proper position—a mere picture of the glorious reality. Failure to flee such temptations and hasten to our Father’s side has very serious effects on our relationship with God. We know, both from Scripture and experientially, that giving in to sexual temptations disrupts our fellowship with God. For when we do so, we elevate the dim picture (sex) above the reality (Covenant fellowship with God). In doing so, we no longer experience God’s face and favour shining upon us.

Here, we are reminded that we keep God’s Covenant by fearing the LORD (Psalm 25:24). Not a fear characterised by terror, but a fear of losing the sense of favour that God has toward us. This fear prevents us from giving in to sexual temptations because we know its dreadful consequences. Covenant fellowship with God transcends all momentary pleasures that sexual stimulus can offer. Covenant fellowship serves to motivate us in our calling to flee fornication and abstain from fleshly lusts. We do this by abandoning any notion that we ought to stand and fight against these temptations; instead, we turn and run towards the open arms of our Covenant Father. May God grant us grace to run.



News from the Churches

SINGAPORE

Our dear Minister-on-loan, Pastor Andy Lanning and his family are back from the United States from his six-week furlough. During his break in the US, he preached in five churches including Heritage PRC, Faith PRC, Georgetown PRC, Grandville PRC and Southeast PRC. Pastor Lanning also gave a presentation of the vibrant church life in CERC. This presentation was attended by members from eleven different PR churches in West Michigan. The crowd of over 800 people was too much for the auditorium and ushers had to turn away some. We thank God for the encouragement.

IRELAND

Earlier this month, the British Reformed Fellowship, had an “8 day 7 night” Reformed conference. The attendees were from all over the British Isles and Europe. Lisa Ong, Christine Ong, and Auntie Eunice Ong from CERC had the opportunity to join the conference. Prof. David Engelsma and Prof. Herman Hanko gave a series of in-depth lectures on sanctification.

USA

On June 29, Rev. James Slopsema preached his farewell sermon in First PRC (Grand Rapids, MI) after having faithfully served the PRC for almost 40 years. Also, since July 1st 2014, Seminarian Ryan Barnhill, who Lord willing will be graduating from seminary in 2015, began his internship at Edgerton, MN PRC. He is under the mentorship of Rev. Douglas Kuiper until 31st December.

Joshua Engelsma, who has recently graduated from seminary had three congregations extend their call to him. They are the vacant congregations of Doon PRC, Faith PRC (Pastor Lanning’s previous church) and First PRC.

Pastor Key received call to labour in the mission field in the Philippines, but has declined the call earlier this month. May the Lord grant a replacement for Pastor Smit who will end his term as Missionary Pastor next year.

PHILIPPINES

The Kleyns returned from their furlough in the US on 17th July. Apart from preaching, Pastor Kleyn gave four presentations on the mission work in the Philippines. Thank God that the presentations were all well attended.

The PRCP (Protestant Reformed Churches in the Philippines) are planning their next Classis meeting on Friday, 31st October. Pray that God will grant them wisdom as they deliberate on matters with regards to their churches.

AUSTRALIA

The Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Australia (EPC) invited Prof. Dykstra and Pastor Decker to speak in their church conferences in the month of July. Prof. Dykstra and Pastor Decker gave one lecture each and the remaining two lectures were given by the Pastors of the EPC.

The two PR men were delegates representing the PRCA in the EPC’s Presbytery meeting (the equivalent of PRCA’s Synodical meeting). As there are vacant congregations in the EPC, the PRCA will continue to aid them by sending their ministers there.



Pastor Dykstra preaching on God's Covenant in the Psalms at Church Camp



Activities for the elderly at Church Camp



One of the many fun games at Church Camp in Desaru



Warm-Ups at Church Sports Day



Pastor Decker came to visit and preached for one Sunday



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Covenant Evangelical Reformed Church

We are a Reformed Church that holds to the doctrines of the Reformation as they are expressed in the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism and the Canons of Dordt.

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 Singapore 368813

Time of Worship
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 9:30am to 11:00am
 Afternoon Service:
 2:00pm to 3:00pm

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