

VOLUME 68 NUMBER 7 · JULY/AUGUST 2021 EDITION

# THE MESSENGER

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE FREE REFORMED CHURCHES OF NORTH AMERICA



**02** MEDITATION  
HOPE AS AN ANCHOR  
OF THE SOUL

**08** CHURCH HISTORY (8)  
THOMAS HOOKER (3)

**16** BIBLE STUDY:  
RELATIONSHIPS (2):  
HAPPILY MARRIED





# HOPE AS AN ANCHOR OF THE SOUL

“Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.”

Hebrews 6:19-20

Though we live in uncertain times, these are also times where there is an excellent opportunity for spiritual growth. It has been, after all, too easy for us to cling to the things of this world. Even God's good blessings of family, relationships, home, or possessions can begin to take too large a place in our hearts and minds. When trials come, including political unrest and increasing hostility towards the church, they can be a good reminder of the sure and steadfast hope in Jesus Christ.

The book of Hebrews was addressed to a people who had suffered many afflictions, reproaches, and losses (Hebrews 10:32-34). Many Hebrew Christians in that time had likely been physically abused, estranged from family, cast out of synagogues, and suffered losses as the Lord Jesus had prophesied (Mark 13). During that persecution, much of it coming from their own people, there was a temptation to return to Judaism. There was a danger of turning to works and forgetting about Christ. The apostle exhorts his hearers to believe that this would be a tragic and spiritually fatal error. It would be to trade God's covenant promises of rest and salvation for hell. He argues that Christ is greater than all creation, greater than the angels, greater than Moses, even that He is the fulfillment of all of God's oaths and promises. Through the book of Hebrews, God teaches His church that the entire Old Testament is a rich foreshadowing of Jesus Christ.

The Holy of Holies is a picture that Hebrews returns to several times to reinforce these truths. This was the room at the back, and the center, of the temple. It was the place where the ark of the covenant sat, with the mercy seat upon it. It was God's dwelling place, a symbol of a throne room. It would have reminded visitors to the temple of a king's courtroom, where he would meet with his subjects. When they had a benevolent king, his palace would be a place of refuge, a place to flee from enemies, and a place to bring their burdens and troubles. (Hebrews 6:18) However, the “throne room” in the temple was off-limits to the entire nation, one man excepted, and even he could enter only on one day of the year.

The Hebrew people would never get to see the inside of that room. The veil stood between them and God's presence. If they

attempted to enter, they would be killed. On the veil were woven images of cherubim, heavenly angels who served as guards. They would have been a reminder of the cherubim who prevented Adam and Eve from returning to Eden. That veil was a constant testimony of our sinfulness and our inability to approach God. It stood closed three hundred sixty-four days of the year as a testimony of God’s holiness and our unworthiness to enter His presence. Only on the day of atonement, one man, a son of Aaron, could enter in with the blood of a sacrifice. His entrance on behalf of the people gave a picture of hope, but it was an incomplete and temporary hope.

Hebrews 6:19 gives a beautiful picture of how the Lord Jesus Christ is a perfect and permanent solution to the problem which the veil represented. It is the hope that Christ, in His perfect covenant-keeping work on the cross, broke through the veil at the very moment of His death. “Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom”(Matt. 27:50–51). At that moment, the tearing of the veil symbolized that the great barrier between God and men had been broken through by the forerunner. In Christ, and through His perfect death, there is a new and living way of access to God.

This passage gives the helpful picture of an anchor to illustrate the result of this, calling the Lord Jesus the “...anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil.” This verse speaks of a ship’s anchor, the large, solid iron weight which would hold a ship in its harbor and keep it secure during storms. Here the image is strongly reinforced. He is a “sure and steadfast” anchor. He is stable, firm, reliable, and will not disappoint. He is the believer’s “anchor” in the true Holy Place, having passed through the heavens to the Father’s right hand.

When you are anchored in Christ, there is a stable and permanent relationship with God. There is a certainty of hope that weathers the storms of life and even reassures us that we are safe from the ultimate judgment of hell. If, in contrast, you try to be anchored in earthly things, you will never be secure. Whether it is your good works, relationships, material things, or even your family, those “anchors” will pass away. If your anchor is your earthly citizenship or your political leader, you will undoubtedly be disappointed in the long term. This is a challenge to think about: Where is your anchor? Who is your anchor?

There is a fascinating tension in the idea of the “anchor of the soul.” The soul is the immaterial, spiritual part of us that we can hardly define. It is the soul which was breathed into Adam by God. (Genesis 2:7) and which returns to God at the moment of death (Eccl.12:7). It would seem that an iron anchor and the soul are complete opposites, but grasping this contrast is a key to the illustration. The reality is, Jesus Christ is more sure, steadfast, firm, and eternal than everything you see right now. This world is passing away. Our lives pass by like a vapor. You cannot cling to anything you have. One day your grasp will fail. Even literal anchors will rust, fail, and one day pass away. If you are clinging to this world or anything in it, be sure that your hope will not last.

We usually picture an anchor in the seabed, far beneath the waters. This anchor, however, is far above us in the heavens. The irony of the picture should strike us, but not because it is an upside-down picture. It is because of where the anchor is firmly secured, and it is because of where the anchor belongs. Jesus Christ, a true man yet truly God, has broken through to the place none of us could enter. In His perfect righteousness and sacrifice, pleasing to the Father, He will never leave the true Holy of Holies in heaven. He is the High Priest, the Mediator, who will always be there for His people. May uncertain times teach many to look to Him in faith! ①

This passage gives the helpful picture of an anchor to illustrate the result of this, calling the Lord Jesus the “...anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil.”

*Pastor Rob VanDoodewaard*

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

**02**

**MEDITATION:**

Hope As An Anchor Of The Soul

**04**

**EDITORIAL:**

Satan's Tactic to Weaken and Ruin (2)

**08**

**CHURCH HISTORY (8):**

Thomas Hooker (3)

**13**

**BOOK REVIEW:**

What Christians Need to Know About Transgenderism

**14**

**BIBLE STUDY:**

Relationships (2)  
Happily Married

**16**

**ORDINATION & INAUGURATION:**

Dr. David H. Kranendonk

**17**

**DISSERTATION:**

A Presentation of Dissertation At Its Defence

**19**

**MISSIONS:**

FRC US Urban Missions

**24**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**



## CONTENTIONS AND DIVISIONS IN CHURCHES:

# SATAN'S TACTIC TO WEAKEN AND RUIN (2)

Last time, we saw how unity among believers is a gift of the Spirit to be cherished and exercised. We also saw how our sinful flesh can sometimes so take hold of us that, even in the defense of a just cause, we do, say, or think things that fail to “keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph. 4:3). In this all, we should not be ignorant of Satan’s devices (2 Cor. 2:11).

### Turning Away from the Captain

The Lord Jesus Christ is the Captain of His people’s salvation (Heb. 2:10). As such, everything ought to run in such a way that every soldier, every battalion, every movement of the Christian army throughout the world is to be directed to Christ. Our eyes need to be on Him. As Paul says, we need to be “holding the Head (Col. 2:19). We need to be “looking unto Jesus” (Heb. 12:2).

When contentions among fellow-Christians arise, the tendency is to look at each other, or to rally around a “Paul, Apollos, or Cephas,” instead of striving together under the authority and command of Jesus Christ. And Satan is happy with that. James says: “But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish” (James 3:14-15). James traces strife like this back to its origin, namely, Satan. And he explains Satan’s tactic: “For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work” (James 3:16). No wonder Satan loves it when true believers are contentious. Confusion and all sorts of evils take over since we are not looking to Him, who is our Peace.

Meanwhile, the opposite is true as well. When we are rooted in the Word of God and focused on Christ, with sin, Satan, and the world as our three-headed enemy, then there is courage, clarity, and power, and Satan’s kingdom trembles.

### Mistaking the Essence of Godliness

Satan also loves it when professing Christians mistake the flesh for the Spirit, and the Spirit for the flesh. Paul had to warn the Galatians vigorously, for they were seeing circumcision as necessary for salvation, and, as this leaven had come into the church in Galatia, so did all sorts of evil, fleshly disputing. He writes: “But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another” (Gal. 5:15). The Galatians were mistaking the flesh for the Spirit, and it showed itself in many ways, including “hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings,” (Gal. 5:20-21), etc. All these things were the works of the flesh, the exact opposite of the fruit of the Spirit (see Gal. 5:22-23), which includes “love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.”

When we mistake the essence of godliness, Satan rejoices, for we have made a Christ of our flesh. We honor ourselves, and pride and envy rule the day. Our

neighbors have occasion to tell themselves that we are no different than sects and cults and other religions because the same pride and censoriousness that is obvious in them is evident in us as well.

On the other hand, Christ has said: “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13:35). Oh that we would not glory in anything “save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature” (Gal. 6:14-15).

### Opening Up to False Teachers

Many of us do not realize the threat that false teachers pose to us and our children. Yet, the Bible warns about them frequently and fervently. Speaking to the Ephesian elders, Paul warned that “grievous wolves [would] enter in among you, not sparing the flock” (Acts 20:29). He warns Timothy likewise of Jannes and Jambres types, who “resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith” (2 Tim. 3:8).

What better soil for false teachers to enter than where professing Christians are focused on fleshly arguments against each other and not holding the head, Christ Jesus. The church at Corinth was such a place. People were focused on “big names,” super-apostles, men of great aptitudes, in comparison to which Paul seemed “rude in speech” (2 Cor. 11:6). Paul’s concern is not for his own reputation, however. It was that they would be beguiled. “I fear, let by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ” (2 Cor. 11:3). The openness the Corinthians had towards man and men’s gifts put them in a treacherous position. “For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him” (2 Cor. 11:4).

We should take the injunctions of Scripture regarding false teachers seriously, and not just periodically but continually. However, we also need to watch the soil, the temperature of our hearts and of our churches, and discern to what extent we have become man-centered and carnal, for the next wave might very well be false teachers. No wonder that Paul pressed upon the church kind and tender affection among each other, “Salute one another with an holy kiss” (Rom. 16:16) and then right on the heels of this: “Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause division and offences, contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them” (Rom. 16:17).

### Lessons

When we consider that we are in a spiritual warfare, not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers (Eph. 6:12), and that disunity is certainly a tactic of Satan in this warfare, we ought to learn from Scripture to arm ourselves in the following ways:

1. We ought to *examine ourselves*, our motives, and our manner by the Word of God in any controversy, disagreement, and dissension. With the help of the Holy Spirit, we ought to suspect that the flesh can easily come into our opinions and the way we go about voicing them (or not voicing them, as may be the case). We ought to study the requirements of Scripture, as well as the example of the godly in Scripture and church history as to how to conduct ourselves in controversy so as to be above reproach, and not subtly to give place to the devil.
2. We ought to *eye God in the Lord Jesus Christ*, “who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification” (Rom. 4:24). Often, we become contentious when we feel attacked and do not believe or remember that “Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered” (Rom. 4:7). We look for validation with others when “it is God that justifieth” (Rom. 8:33). We often become contentious when we are distracted from what should be the focus of our trust, namely Christ and Him crucified. The apostle urged the Hebrews: “Consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds” (Heb. 12:3).
3. We ought to *aim at the glory of God* above all and in all things. When we aim at the glory of God, man’s glory and honor recedes far into the background (Ps. 115:1). It is a sad thing when, like the disciples of Christ, we dispute among ourselves “who should be the greatest” (Mark 9:34). Who

**EDITOR:** Dr. Gerald M. Bilkes  
2692 Bridge Place NE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49525  
USA · T: 616.977.0599 ext.121  
E: jerry.bilkes@prts.edu

**ASSISTANT EDITOR:**  
Rev. David H. Kranendonk  
T: 226.980.9607 · E: kranendonk@frcna.org  
The Editors report to the Synodical  
Publications Committee.

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS:**  
· Mr. David Tamminga  
· Rev. Ian Macleod  
· Rev. W. Klaver  
· Rev. Scott Dibbet  
· Mr. Hans VanDoodeward  
· Mr. Michael Driesse  
· Mr. John DenDekker, Treasurer

**SUBSCRIPTION RATE**  
Canada & U.S.A. - \$33.00 ANNUALLY  
**PER SUBSCRIPTION** The Messenger is  
published 11 times per year (July & August  
issues are combined).

**SUBSCRIPTIONS/REMITTANCES**  
Subscription requests, invoices, and  
payments should be addressed to:  
Janey Slingerland  
(Publications Administrator)  
18 Chapala Cres. S.E.  
Calgary, AB T2X 3M4 CANADA  
T: 403.254.6591 · E: bookorders@frcna.org

**SUBMISSIONS/ANNOUNCEMENTS/  
NOTICES:** All articles, notices for family  
announcements, obituaries, anniversaries,  
and non-commercial advertisements for the  
**SEPTEMBER 2021** issue should reach the  
editor no later than **TUESDAY, AUGUST 3,  
2021** and should be sent to:  
Mrs. Rhonda Kroesbergen  
(Messenger Administrator)  
E: messenger@frcna.org

**OPEN WINDOWS**  
This bi-monthly publication for children is  
under the direction of the Free Reformed  
Publications Committee:  
Rev. Jerrold Lewis, General Editor  
160 West Parkway  
Pompton Plains, NJ 07444  
E: jlewis@frcna.org

**FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR MISSIONS  
AND OUTREACH CAUSES SHOULD BE  
DIRECTED AS FOLLOWS:**

**FOREIGN MISSIONS**  
Dietrich DeKruyff, Financial Administrator  
14 Southland Dr., London, ON. N6P 1C2  
E: dietrichdekruyff@gmail.com

Keep in contact with  
your missionaries online:

**RADIO EVANGELISM & HOME MISSIONS**  
Banner of Truth Radio Broadcast  
Mr. John denDekker, Treasurer  
16726 – 80th Avenue  
Surrey, BC V4N 0G8 CANADA  
T: 604.576.8935 · E: jdendekker@telus.net

**REFUGEE FUND**  
James Van der Zwan, Treasurer  
26829 – 33B Ave., Aldergrove, BC V4W 3G8  
T: 604.818.3423 · E: jplumber@telus.net

**CHRISTIAN MINISTRY TO ISRAEL**  
Mr. John Wilbrink, Treasurer  
8 Weneil Drive, Freeleton, ON L8B 0Z6  
T: 905.659.7413 · E: john.wilbrink@gmail.com

Read The Messenger on the Free Reformed  
website: [www.frcna.org](http://www.frcna.org)



is the greatest should be plain to everyone: “Let all the earth keep silence before [the Lord]” (Hab. 2:20). Let us beware when man is on a pedestal in our mind, and when we think of God’s glory as a servant to our own cause and good. It ought to be the exact other way around. The *solī in solī Deo gloria* is of vital importance.

4. We ought to *pray much for each other*. If we are to pray for those who despitefully use us (Matt. 5:44), we ought certainly to pray for brothers and sisters in the family of God, that we would prove “what is acceptable unto the Lord. And have no

fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness” (Eph. 6:11). Along with this praying for each other, there ought to be a charitable spirit among us in things that are “indifferent” (*adiaphora*; see Rom. 14:1-6). There may be differences on what constitutes indifferent matters, but even here we ought to have a charitable spirit (Phil. 3:15-16). Connected to this is a fervent love for one another (1 Pet. 1:22), and a readiness to both ask for forgiveness and grant forgiveness, when we wrong or when we are wronged (Col. 3:12-13).

5. We ought to *submit to God’s chastisements* when they come into our lives, as well as *be open to godly reproof*, when we err. When cross providences come upon us, it is very easy for bitterness to come into our soul, even a root of bitterness (see Heb 12:15), and this will certainly lead to no good. Paul needed to withstand Peter to the face (Gal. 2:11), and David cultivated an openness to reproof (Ps. 141:5). Both giving and accepting reproof are arts that need to be learned from Scripture by the Spirit, but God can give grace for both, and certainly meekness of heart is of absolute necessity for both giving and accepting reproof (see e.g., 1 Cor. 4:21; Gal 6:1; 2 Tim. 2:25)

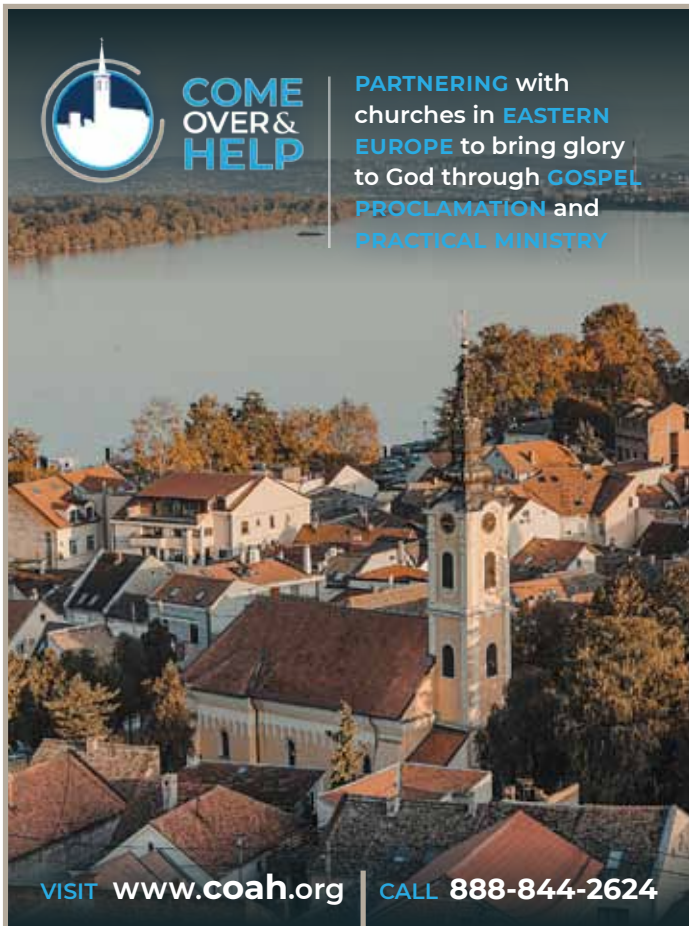
6. We ought to *know deep communion* with God through the Holy Spirit by the Word of God. Someone who knows the life of grace, and what it is to humble himself or herself before the Lord, will desire “sweet communion, Lord, with thee.” Though communion with God will not prevent Satan’s attacks (see Matt 4:1-10), it does arm us when these attacks come. How we need the Lord to be our All in All, for then Satan has little inlet. In fact, what threatens him most is when God’s people “stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel; and in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition” (Phil. 1:27-28). Certainly, Christians, full of the Spirit, striving together for the faith of the gospel would be an ominous token for Satan. May the Lord give this. ①  
*To be continued...*

[Next time we hope to see how divisions that have come into the assembly might be healed by the Spirit and grace of God. A helpful resource is Jeremiah Burroughs, *Irenicum: To the lovers of truth and peace. Heart-divisions opened in the causes and evils of them: with cautions that we may not be hurt by them, and endeavours to heal them.*]

**CORRECTION AND APOLOGY:**

I sincerely apologize that I stated in my article about youth activities in the last issue of *The Messenger* that Rev. A. Stehouwer had recently passed away. In reality, his dear wife recently passed away (Sept. 2019). Though he broke his hip and contracted Covid in the past year, he has recovered well. I should have known because I had contact with his family at the time of his wife’s passing. I am thankful for his gracious response to this error. He gives greetings and wishes our congregations well.

- Pastor D. Kranendonk



**COME OVER & HELP**

PARTNERING with churches in **EASTERN EUROPE** to bring glory to God through **GOSPEL PROCLAMATION** and **PRACTICAL MINISTRY**

VISIT [www.coah.org](http://www.coah.org) CALL 888-844-2624



Contact your deacon or Peace Haven Director, (SEE BELOW)

**PEACE HAVEN**  
FREE REFORMED ASSOCIATION

PEACE HAVEN, a ministry of Free Reformed deacons, offers you and your family help with disabilities:

- a listening ear
- meaningful day and evening programs
- help accessing church and government resources
- respite or vacation care
- residential care

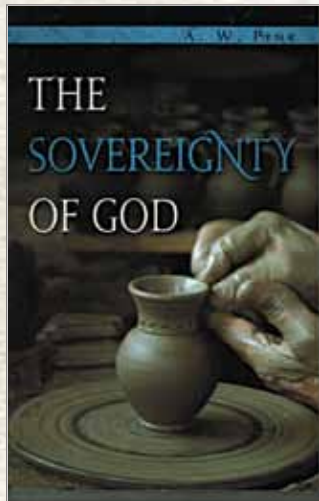
Margaret Heemskerck, [mheemskerck.peacehaven@gmail.com](mailto:mheemskerck.peacehaven@gmail.com) or 519.770.8816

# ReformedBookServices

PROMOTING GODLINESS, REVIVAL & REFORMATION

**GREAT  
SELECTION  
OF CHRISTIAN  
NEW & USED  
BOOKS AT  
LOW PRICES**

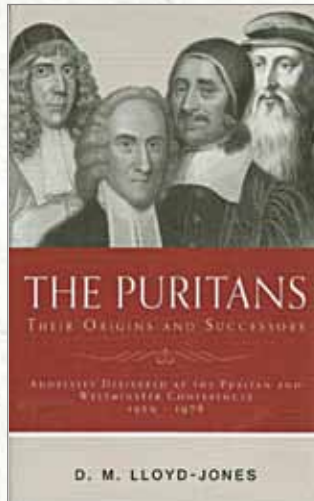
## CLASSIC TITLES



### **The Sovereignty of God**

By Arthur W. Pink  
This edition has the same content as the earlier editions of this classic exposition on God's sovereignty, whereby He chooses undeserving sinners to salvation. Softcover, 154 pages, Banner of Truth Trust.

**RBS Price \$16.50**



### **The Puritans: Their Origins and Successors**

By Martyn D. Lloyd-Jones  
What did the Puritans and their successors teach and what can we learn from them for our life and witness today? Dr. Lloyd-Jones believed that the study of history is vital to the well-being of the church today. Hardcover, Banner of Truth Trust.

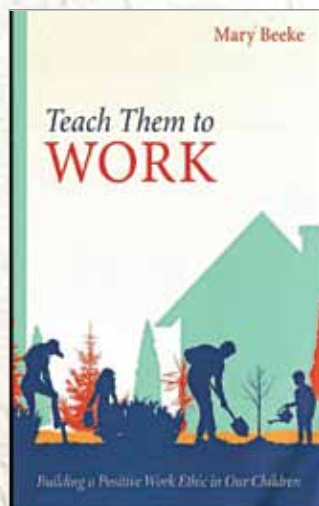
**RBS Price \$32.00**

## NEW TITLES

### **Teach them to Work: Building a Positive Work Ethic in Our Children**

By Mary Beeke  
The author, who is a pastor's wife, educator, and mother, sets forth in 23 short chapters work and parenting principles from Scripture and gives practical applications to establish these in your home. Softcover, 224 pages, Reformation Heritage Books.

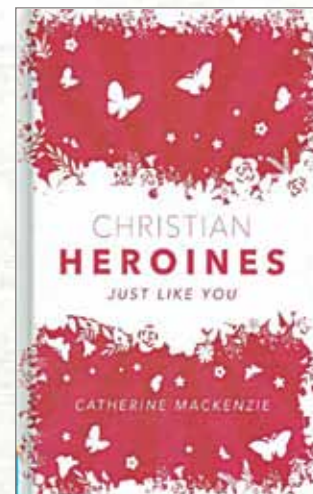
**RBS Price \$13.50**



### **Christian Heroines, Just Like You**

By Catherine Mackenzie  
In this book written for teens, the well-known author relates twenty-one real life stories of heroines in church history, from the slave girl Blandina to the young mother Betty Stam. Lessons are drawn from real life. Paperback, 167 pages, Christian Focus Publications.

**RBS Price \$8.50**



**IN CANADA: REFORMED BOOK SERVICES** • 230 Lynden Road, Unit 5A, Brantford, ON N3R 8A3  
• T: 519.304.4709

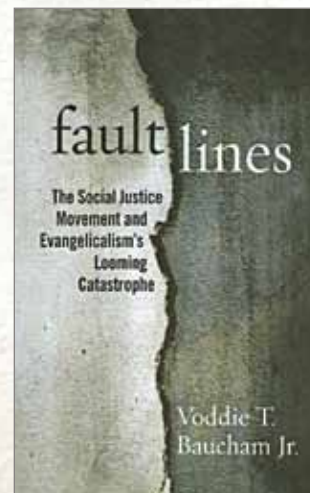
E: sales@reformedbookservices.ca  
• www.reformedbookservices.ca  
• Store Hours: Mon-Wed 10-5 | Thurs 10-9 | Fri 10-5 | Sat 10-3  
Orders and Deliveries also at:  
\*Niagara Depot, 195 Victoria Avenue, Fenwick, ON L0S 1C0  
• E: niagaradepotrbs@gmail.com

**USA CUSTOMERS:  
REFORMATION HERITAGE BOOKS**  
• 3070 29th Street SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49512  
T: 616.977.0889 • F: 616.285.3246  
• E: orders@heritagebooks.org  
• www.heritagebooks.org

### **Fault Lines: The Social Justice Movement and Evangelicalism's Looming Catastrophe**

By Voddie Baucham Jr.  
In this powerful book, Baucham, a preacher, professor, and church planter, sheds light on one of the issues of our day--the disturbing worldview behind the social justice movement and Critical Race Theory--revealing how it has infiltrated almost every institution today, including some churches.

Hardcover, 251 page, Salem Books,  
**RBS Price \$32.00**



**GIFT CERTIFICATES AVAILABLE**



## PILGRIMS AND PURITANS IN AMERICA (8)

# SOME OUTSTANDING PURITAN LEADERS IN NEW ENGLAND (4)

## THOMAS HOOKER (3)

### His Doctrine of Conversion (Continued)

Last time, we looked at Hooker's doctrine of conversion in which he states that before a sinner is saved, he undergoes a process of preparation. According to Hooker, this process requires the sinner's diligent use of the means of grace, such as prayer, Bible reading, and faithful church attendance. Although he firmly believed that the sole Author of regeneration is the Holy Spirit, Hooker's opponents accused him of assigning a significant role to man in coming to saving faith. He denied their charge and insisted that he had always taught that salvation is not man's, but God's work. Like all the Puritans, he fully adhered to the doctrine of sovereign grace, while at the same time insisting that God prepares sinners for salvation by means of a process that involves them actively and responsibly.

This does not mean, however, that all Puritans agreed with Hooker on every aspect of his doctrine of preparation. Many questions were and continue to be raised about the nature, duration, and implications of the preparation process Hooker deemed necessary for salvation.

### The Nature of Hooker's Doctrine of Preparation

According to Hooker, God prepares sinners for salvation by Christ, but on the condition that they know they are lost and on their way to perdition. Christ will save only broken-hearted and contrite mourners for sin (Isaiah 61:1-3). Contrition begins with a deep awareness of sin (Ezek. 36:3; Jer. 2:19). What God requires of the sinner, Hooker says,

is not a mere superficial glance, but a clear and searching view into the depths of sin. One must peer through "a little peep-hole into hell," witness the pains of the damned, and realize that sin is a greater evil than any pain. For sin robs us of the greatest good, "communion with God," sets itself against the Lord and provokes His justice, and "procures all plagues and punishments to the damned."<sup>1</sup>

Quoting from Hooker's book, *The Soul's Preparation for Christ*, historian George McKenna writes that, according to Hooker, preparation involves thorough self-examination and a deep awareness of what sin really is and what agonies are experienced while pleading for pardon and reconciliation. The soul's salvation will require more than just a little mercy from God, "not a few spoonfulls or buckets-full," but "a well of mercy to purge such a miserable wretch as thou art...." The sinner is like "a man that hath a bone out of joint and it is now festered; it will make him cry many an 'oh'; before it be brought into his right place again." Then, to emphasize the fact that the conversion process is not simply the passive one of enduring pain, he changes the metaphor from having a bone set to doing something:





washing one's filthy clothes. "It is not a dipping of a foul cloth in water that will clean it, but it must be soaked and rinsed in it: so you must not think to have your souls' stains of sin washed away with a few tears;... it is not a little examination, nor a little sorrow will serve the turn; the Lord will pull down those proud hearts of yours and lets you go a begging for mercy all your days [until] you may have it at your last gasp when all is done."<sup>2</sup>

### Preparation Varies in Length and Pattern

Although Hooker did not teach that conversion always had to be a lengthy protracted process, he also believed that God often makes sinners pass through many stages of conviction, which takes considerable time. Neither did he insist that everyone had to conform to the same model or pattern of conversion. Not only is there variety in the length of time, but also the degree of conviction of sin varies from person to person. Some pass through long periods of fear and distress. Others, like Lydia, pass from death to life in a very brief time and in a gentle way.<sup>3</sup>

### Preparation Includes Turning from Sin

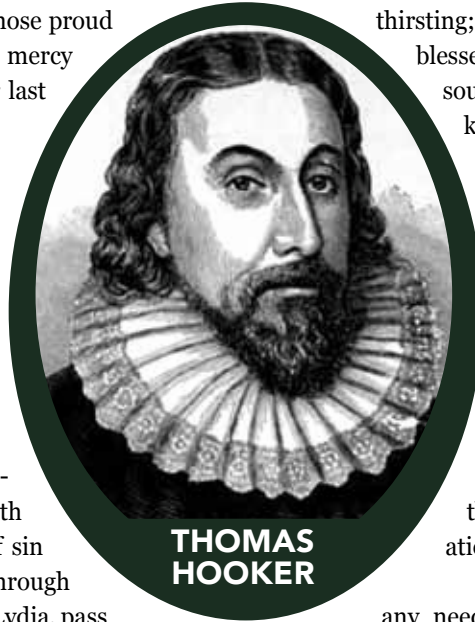
Sin is idolatry, or worship of the creature rather than the Creator. Before a sinner is converted to God, there needs to be an aversion to and turning from sin. This initial turning from idolatry must not be attributed to the power of the natural man, but to the irresistible power of the Spirit of contrition working upon the soul prior to inhabiting that soul. The soul is divorced from its idol but not yet remarried, nor in love with the heavenly Husband.<sup>4</sup>

Here Hooker's view becomes problematic as he seems to imply that the sinner, while contrite to the point that he hates sin, stands temporarily in an intermediate state prior to conversion where he is neither in Adam nor in Christ.

Hooker's critics have pounced on him for what seems to be a concession toward Arminianism. For them, one is either in Christ or in Adam, not both at the same time. Joel Beeke and Paul Smalley, however, come to his defense. They point out that Hooker, by stating that the contrite sinner turns from sin to Christ, passes through a process that *logically* precedes but *temporally* coincides with regeneration. In other words, the process whereby the sinner passes from spiritual death to spiritual life is a gradual one. Hooker's process of preparation, therefore, should be seen as a logical rather than a chronological one.<sup>5</sup> Beeke and Smalley admit that there is ambiguity here that invites further research.

At issue is the timing of regeneration in the process of preparation and conversion. Hooker believed that we cannot tell exactly when faith is born, whether a man has fully apprehended Christ or when he first hungers for Him... Just as the forming of a child's body in the womb is a fearful, wonderful, and mysterious process

(Ps.139:13-16), so the Spirit's forming of faith in the soul is a secret as Christ Himself taught (John 3:8)... It is hard to say at what instant faith is wrought, whether not till a man apprehends Christ and the promise, or even in his earnest desires, hungering and thirsting; for even these [exercises] are pronounced blessed. According to Hooker, it is possible that the soul has become united to Christ but does not yet know it.<sup>6</sup>



THOMAS  
HOOKER

### Preparation Involves Humiliation

If the first stage of preparation involves contrition or sorrow over sin, the second phase brings humiliation or a sense of shame and despair. As Hooker explains:

A true sight and sense of a man's sinful condition sets men upon the search, awakens them out of that senseless security in which they were buried, makes them look about them, puts them upon the serious consideration of their own spiritual condition.<sup>7</sup>

Before they were convicted they never saw any need of reading, hearing, prayer, seeking, and enquiry; but now when they find themselves besieged with sins and plagues, heaven frowning, hell gaping, their consciences accusing, and themselves dropping down to the grave, and their souls to hell, they think it high time, and more than time to bestir themselves, to do what they can, and to cry for help and direction in their desperate distress and danger. 'The whole need not the physician', therefore they do not send, nor yet are they willing to receive, nor care to enquire, or take any physic (medication). But when the disease grows fierce, and life is in danger, then they [send] out messengers far and near for a physician?<sup>8</sup>

At length, having looked 'to himself and his self-sufficiency, and finding no [comfort] there, he falls down before the Lord and begs for mercy, and yet he sees himself unworthy of mercy, without which he must perish. He has nothing, and he can do nothing to merit it.'<sup>9</sup>

Hooker based his doctrine of humiliation largely on an exposition of the parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15:14-18). This story illustrates that what happened to the "Lost Son" is analogous to all sinners who experience a degree of humiliation on account of their sins. Hooker recognizes three stages in humiliation in the prodigal son's homecoming:

1. When he is reduced to poverty, he does not immediately return to his father's house but takes a job to earn a living. In a similar way, the sinner, awakened to his misery, looks for help to himself or others, instead of Christ who alone can help him.
2. When he ends up at the trough to feed the swine, his disappointment increases when no one gives him to eat of the animal's fodder; so it is with the sinner who despairs when he fails to find salvation in himself or any other creature.



3. When the lost son comes home, he expects to be hired as his father's servant because he feels unworthy to be received as his son. Similarly, the returning sinner falls down before God's throne submitting himself to His justice and hoping for His mercy.

Summarizing Hooker on this subject, Beeke and Smalley write:

Just as conviction breaks the heart and makes sin wearisome by its bitter consequences, humiliation 'pares away all self-sufficiency' and confidence in a man's privileges, and all his good performances and all his duties, by which he is ready to shelter himself. Conviction moves sinners to use the means of grace in seeking peace of conscience; humiliation shows sinners that their use of religious means cannot save them, only Christ working through the means. The humiliated soul does not despair of God's mercy, but despairs of all help from self and so submits himself wholly to God ... and is content to be at his disposing.<sup>10</sup>

### Modern Critics of Hooker

Over the years, there have been many critics who, in varying degrees, have disagreed with Hooker's doctrine of preparation. Let us first examine what modern historians and theologians such as Perry Miller, Norman Pettit, and Robert Kendall have said about Hooker.

Miller, a renowned scholar and expert in Puritan studies, disagreed with Hooker's view that regeneration and conversion are part of a *gradual* process, while for Calvin they take place *instantaneously*, like "a forcible seizure, or rape of the surprised will." How can there be any human activity in conversion, he said, if everything is done by God? The New England Puritans, Miller says, shrank from such absolute sovereignty and tried to soften it through covenant theology. "They magnified the possibilities of a man's producing in himself a receptive frame of mind. Even while professing the most abject fealty to the Puritan Jehovah, the Puritan divines, especially Hooker, dethroned Him." Interestingly, Miller had a much higher regard for the other leading theologian in New England, John Cotton, "whose love for Calvin's theology led him to deny preparation," which made him "a better Calvinist."<sup>11</sup> Another New England scholar, Norman Pettit, takes his criticism of Hooker and other Preparationists a step further when he writes, "In orthodox Reformed theology of the sixteenth century, no allowance had been made for the biblical demand to prepare the heart for righteousness. In strict predestinarian dogma, the sinner was taken by storm--his heart wrenched from depravity to grace."<sup>12</sup> Like Miller, Pettit labours under the false dichotomy of trying to determine which side of the chasm they stand on with respect to conversion: the sudden intervention of absolute sovereignty or the gradual process of human activity, as if these are the only alternatives. John Cotton, Pettit says, carried his doctrine to such an extreme that he was unable even to accept the divine exhortations to preparation as useful. By contrast, Miller concludes, Hooker was

preaching an entirely different doctrine of conversion than Cotton.<sup>13</sup> A third modern critic is Robert T. Kendall, whose main objection to preparationism is that the Puritans moved away from Calvin via his successor, Beza, to Perkins, who replaced Calvin's gracious system with a more legalistic system that included preparation. There is nothing in Calvin's doctrine, Kendall says, that suggests, even in the process of regeneration, that man must be prepared...by the work of the Law prior to faith.

Beeke and Jones totally reject the criticism of the three theologians mentioned above. The Calvin versus the Preparationists thesis fails because it assumes that God's sovereignty is incompatible with human responsibility and activity.<sup>14</sup> The notion that the early reformers opposed all forms of preparation for fear that this would jeopardise the doctrine of divine sovereignty and that the Puritans, especially Hooker, became semi-Arminian is false.

John Calvin would have agreed with Hooker and other preparationists, at least in essence. To mention only one example, the reformer of Geneva wrote in his *Commentary on a Harmony of the Evangelists* that while man has no merit or ability to save himself so that salvation must be entirely by God's grace, there is also gracious preparation for it. Calvin believed that, as a preparation in His elect, the Lord frequently communicates to them a secret desire, by which they are led to Him.<sup>15</sup>

### Puritan Critics of Hooker

Although Hooker's doctrine of preparation met with almost universal approval, some of his Puritan colleagues had reservations about specific details of his doctrine. Let me start with the positive response of most, if not all, New England ministers, including even John Cotton with whom Hooker had some important differences. While still in England, Cotton told his congregation in Botolph that "the Spirit of grace will not come into a heart that has not been in some measure prepared," and, after moving to New England, he reminded his hearers that God prepares sinners by dashing their worldly confidence. His colleagues there, Bulkeley, Shepherd (Hooker's son-in-law), Cotton, and Governor Winthrop were of the same mind. As E. Brooks Holifield writes:

All of them were convinced that God's usual course was to break the heart before scattering the seeds of faith... Hooker believed that preparation required a ministry that would uncover sin. That meant preaching the law. Cotton agreed: There is a generation of preachers, he complained ... that will have no law preached, but only draw men to Christ by the love of Christ. Such smooth and comforting sermons are worthless; the heart has to be wounded unto death.<sup>16</sup>

Yet, while all Puritans both in Old and New England saw the necessity of preparation as part of leading sinners to Christ, not all of them were agreed on the degree and duration of its process. Many took issue with Hooker on the severity of the conviction he deemed necessary before a sinner could come to faith and assurance of salvation. Some thought that he set the standards for conversion much too high.



Iain Murray mentions that one Puritan minister, in an introduction to Hooker's posthumous work, *The Application of Redemption*, wrote: "Perhaps he urged too far and insisted too much on conviction preceding saving conversion...a man may be held too long under John Baptist's water."<sup>17</sup>

Other Puritans voiced similar concerns, but none of them opposed Hooker on the very idea of a preparative work of the Holy Spirit. They certainly would not have agreed with modern critics like Miller, Pettit, and Kendall.

### Iain Murray's Evaluation of Hooker

According to Murray, there is an enormous contrast between the Puritan view of conversion and what many evangelicals teach on this subject today. He writes that in the 17<sup>th</sup> century,

conviction of sin was no theory but a felt experience and discriminating preaching was seen as a necessity. In the last (nineteenth) century, however, the whole understanding of the doctrine of conversion underwent a major reconstruction. It became generally believed that ... conversion should be regarded as instantaneous, and that everyone who professes Christ may also immediately 'claim' the assurance which the promises of Scripture offer. [This resulted in] a general departure of conviction of sin and a disappearance of all 'sloughs of despond.' It introduced a type of experience which guaranteed 'joy' but did not secure holiness and greater spirituality... The Puritans were convinced that God's Word is to be preached to alarm, to search, and to humble hearts which are by nature careless and indifferent... Nothing gave them greater concern than the existence of ministers who are 'slight in searching' and 'hasty to heal.'<sup>18</sup>

Murray concludes with this biblically warranted optimistic note:

It is a striking fact that it was a return to the searching, applicatory preaching of the Puritans in the 1730's which heralded the Great Awakening. The truth is that just because the searching preaching of Thomas Hooker was in essence biblical, this type of preaching has re-appeared in all periods of spiritual awakening. Although in some periods such preaching may indeed almost vanish from the earth, it always re-appears and again the cry is heard from multitudes, 'Men and brethren, what shall we do?' So it must be, for the Spirit of the Lord is not straitened.<sup>19</sup>

### The Importance of Hooker's Views

Hooker was a great man with exceptional gifts in many areas. He was a gifted preacher as well as skilled pastor, organizer, and diplomat. That said, it needs to be pointed out there were also some imbalances and inconsistencies in his theology. In his desire to purify the church, he tended to downplay simple childlike faith in Christ in favour of a much more involved way of salvation. Though he allowed for exceptions, his overall emphasis was that conversion involves a long process of soul-searching conviction of sin and the

impression was given that unless one had a similar experience, his conversion to Christ was suspect.

Some Puritans, like Goodwin, Baxter, Firmin, and the Scot, Ralph Erskine, as well as the Dutch Further Reformation theologian, Koelman, had serious reservations, particularly with Hooker's statement that one of the marks of true conversion was being content to be damned to hell.<sup>20</sup> The continental Reformers in Geneva and Holland certainly saw it differently. They trusted God's covenant promise that he would work in believing parents and their children, and believed that the Holy Spirit usually works gradually through godly parents who instruct their children, gently leading them to Christ.

We do, however, agree with Hooker that the law must be preached, because "by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Romans 3:20). This requirement is highlighted by the Reformed Confessions, especially by the Heidelberg Catechism which reminds us that God will have the Ten Commandments strictly preached in order that, throughout "our lifetime, we may learn more and more to know our sinful nature, and thus become the more earnest in seeking the remission of sin and righteousness in Christ."<sup>21</sup>

*Don't discard used Christian literature or Bibles!*  
**CHRISTIAN SALVAGE MISSION**  
 "Worldwide Distribution of Evangelical Literature"  
 3 – 120 Lancing Drive, Hamilton, ON Canada L8W 3A1  
 Phone/Fax: 905-574-3334 Email: info@csmcanda.org  
[www.csmcanada.org](http://www.csmcanada.org)

The mandate of Christian Salvage Mission is to gather Bibles and other evangelical Christian literature that is no longer needed from the shelves of people across Canada and ship it to Christians in third world countries who are less blessed than we are.

*"Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost."*  
 John 6:12



**Hooker: An Important Statesman**

Hooker was very good at handling both theological and political issues. He was frequently called upon by Governor John Winthrop to sort through the controversies of their day. He did this with John Cotton in the Antinomian controversy and with Anne Hutchinson and her extra-biblical revelation views. He also dealt with Roger Williams during the freedom of conscience dispute, as well as the threat of disunity posed by new settlers and their divergent convictions.

Today many people believe that Anne Hutchinson and Roger Williams<sup>22</sup> were unfairly treated by the New England authorities, that they were the victims of bigotry, cruelty, and religious intolerance, which the proponents of the Critical Race Theory and White Supremacy ideology abhor. However, we need to take into account the historical context in these cases. The Massachusetts Bay Colony was a Puritan experiment, guided by John Winthrop’s vision of a ‘City set upon a Hill.’ Hutchinson, Williams, and other dissenters posed a major threat to the Colony’s prevailing view, and the authorities dealt with their opponents with a degree of self-restraint and tolerance that was remarkable for that age.

Another positive trait in Hooker was his biblical view of the state, which helped lay the foundation for New England’s concept of democracy, which, in turn, contributed to the formation of the USA. While Governor Winthrop favoured an aristocratic view of government, Hooker believed in democracy and the consent of the governed. Winthrop wrote, “I do not conceive that ever God did ordain democracy as a fit government either for Church or Commonwealth.” Hooker disagreed and replied, “a general counsel (governance) chosen by the people is most suitable to rule and the most safe for relief of the whole.” Hooker was convinced that the choice of public magistrates belongs to the people of God at His direction. He based this on Deuteronomy 1:13 where God says to Moses, “Take you wise men, and understanding, and known among your tribes, and I will make them rulers over you,”

The General Court agreed with Hooker and established the so-called *Fundamental Laws*, which served as the first democratic constitution in the New World. According to many historians, this law suggested by Thomas Hooker is the earliest known piece of legislation, enacted not by royal charter, but by the people them-

selves, as a primary and supreme law by which the government is constituted. His ideas became the germ of the idea of the Commonwealth, and it was developed into the Constitution of 1639. As Leonard Bacon wrote in his *Early Constitutionary History of Connecticut*: “For larger freedom in building his ideal New Jerusalem, the statesmanlike pastor, Thomas Hooker ... with his associates, devised what has been declared to be “the first example in history of a written constitution—a distinct organic law constituting a government and defining its powers.”<sup>23</sup>

It is not by accident, therefore, that, due to Hooker’s contribution, the state of Connecticut became known as the Constitution State.<sup>24</sup> ①

**(Endnotes)**

- 1 Hooker, *The Soul’s Preparation for Christ*, pp. 13-16.
- 2 *The Soul’s Preparation for Christ*, pp.9-10; George McKenna, *The Puritan Origins of American Patriotism*, p.22.
- 3 *The Soul’s Preparation for Christ*, p. 168.
- 4 Hooker, *The Application of Redemption*, 9 and 10, pp. 674-679.
- 5 Joel Beeke and Paul Smalley, *Prepared by Grace, for Grace*, p. 79.
- 6 Beeke and Smalley, *Prepared by Grace, for Grace*, p. 80.
- 7 Hooker, *The Application of Redemption*, 9 and 10, p. 560.
- 8 Hooker, *The Application of Redemption*, 9 and 10, p. 562.
- 9 Hooker, *The Soul’s Humiliation*, pp. 131 and 132.
- 10 Beeke and Smalley, *Prepared by Grace, for Grace*, pp. 81 and 82; quoting Hooker, *The Soul’s Humiliation*, pp. 3 and 5.
- 11 Joel Beeke & Mark Jones, *A Puritan Theology*, pp. 450-451.
- 12 Beeke & Jones, *A Puritan Theology*, p.451.
- 13 Beeke & Jones, *A Puritan Theology*, p. 451.
- 14 Beeke & Jones, *A Puritan Theology*, p. 452.
- 15 Iain Murray, *Hooker’s Doctrine of Conversion*, p.?
- 16 E. Brooks Holifield, *Theology in America*, p. 43.
- 17 Murray, “Thomas Hooker and the Doctrine of Conversion,” *Banner of Truth Magazine*, Jan. 1980, issue 196, p. 31.
- 18 Murray, “Thomas Hooker and the Doctrine of Conversion,” *Banner of Truth Magazine*, Nov. 1980, issue 206, pp. 17-18.
- 19 Murray, “Thomas Hooker and the Doctrine of Conversion,” *Banner of Truth Magazine*, Nov. 1980, Issue 206, p.21.
- 20 Beeke & Smalley, *Prepared by Grace for Grace*, p. 172.
- 21 Lord’s Day 44, Q&A. 44.
- 22 I plan to deal with Roger Williams in a later article.
- 23 Quoted by Bacon in *A History of Christianity*, p. 102.
- 24 Wikipedia: Connecticut is known as the Constitution State because of its early adoption of the Fundamental Orders in 1639, thought to be the earliest document of its kind in western civilization.

Christian Ministry to Israel commits over \$105,000 CDN annually to support Ha-Gefen Publishing who’s mission is to translate solid Reformed literature and books into Hebrew for distribution to Jews around the world.



We are committed to spreading the Gospel of CHRIST JESUS among the people of Israel and Jews worldwide. Help us to spread the Gospel through your prayers and donations. Please donate by cheque or online at [www.cmisrael.org](http://www.cmisrael.org)



To donate by cheque, please mail your donation to: Christian Ministry to Israel, c/o John Wilbrink, 8 Weneil Drive, Freelon ON L8B 0Z6 Reg. Charity: 85123 0466 RR 0001

# WHAT CHRISTIANS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT TRANSGENDERISM

*GENDER IDEOLOGY – What Do Christians Need to Know?* by Sharon James. Published by Christian Focus Publications Ltd, Geanies House, Fearn, Ross-shire, IV 20 1TW, Great Britain, 2019. Softcover, 131 pages.

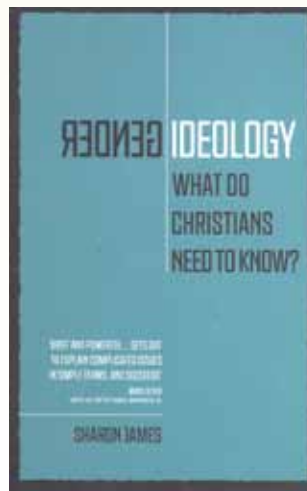
Sometimes there are books which we find uncomfortable to read. This may be one of them, especially if you live in “a bubble” as many of us do - a conservative Christian home, church, school, relatively traditional community, and even workplace. This is a great blessing for which to thank the Lord, one we need to defend and promote as much as possible. Yet, we should not kid ourselves that very quickly, ominous, evil cultural forces, including government legislation, are invading our society and impacting us; hence this book. The author believes that transgenderism, with its related social forces, pose the biggest social and moral threats to Christians; and that is why she has written this book.

Transgenderism holds that all reality is socially constructed and gender reality is something we can determine for ourselves. If we feel our body is restricting the way we feel and we want to become the opposite sex, there are ways and means by medication and surgery to transition to another gender. What is so dangerous is that it is legally and medically sanctioned and permeating all the institutions of our society.

The author explains how transgenderism is threatening our biological identity as male and female, and therefore does away with God’s good design. The Genesis account tells us that God created man and woman with equal dignity, in the ‘the image’ of God, although with significant differences. “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him, male and female created he them” (Gen. 1:27). James comments: “To disparage the physical human body is to disparage the God in whose image we are made. To downplay the male-female distinction is to reject God’s design” (p.76). This is exactly what transgenderism does. It believes that gender identity is independent of biological sex. If a person, a biological male, feels that he is female and wants to change gender, this is something we have to acknowledge and promote. The same holds for someone in a female body who wants to transition to a male. To insist that such persons by birth are sexually male and female is wrongful discrimination and such persons need to be helped to transition. It is held that if this is not recognized early in childhood, such persons could be harmed for life and become suicidal.

This is part of a global, anti-Christian movement often referred to as LG-BTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer), which flies in the face of God’s creation and denies Him as Creator. The ominous part is that gender theory is becoming embedded everywhere in our society – our laws, our courts, government and health systems, the media, labour laws, and especially the education system from kindergarten to university. Children’s books are written to show that this is a natural condition. Parents and children are taking each other to court in conflicts about transgender makeovers. Included is a push to change traditional pronouns such as she and he and I to transgendered pronouns such as “ze” and “zir” and “them.” The practical outworking may be seen in the use of public washrooms and locker rooms, and in competitive sports where biological women have to compete against transgendered “women,” whose physical bodies in most cases are stronger than those of biological females.

How do we, as Christians who have the Bible as our supreme authority, engage with this culture? This book will help you take a firm stand on Scrip-




ture, and also shows from science and examples that the transgender movement is not only against God’s created order, but also against science and causes tremendous harm. The author cites cases as examples. In a chapter, “Where did ‘Gender Theory’ come from?”, she shows that the critical theory movement\* has been a long time in coming and cites influences of Karl Marx, Sigmund Freud, Alfred Kinsey, Herbert Marcuse, and others. Sadly, the movement towards identity politics and radical feminism may also be seen in a ‘false gospel’ and a ‘compromised church’ (pp. 82-85).

But are there not persons who have been born with sexual deformities? Yes, there are! However, James brings in medical and scientific evidence to show we are born with either female or male DNA – they are not mixed. She cites proof

that “no amount of surgery can change a man into a woman, or a woman into a man. The xx or xy chromosomal pattern is set at conception” (p. 34). But what about gender dysphoria, where, even at a young age, children identify with opposite male or female personalities and feel trapped in their opposite physical bodies? In the chapter, “The ‘Transgendering’ of Children”, the author refers to trusted professionals and experts who offer help to deal with what is clinically called ‘childhood-onset dysphoria’ from an early age and adolescents who exhibit ‘rapid-onset dysphoria’ (p. 90). She posits reasons for such confusion to the over-sexualization of our culture, family breakdown, and deficiencies in parenting, leading to emotional, mental, and sexual disorientation (p. 98-99), which certainly is not to be remedied with transformative medication that mutilates bodies, usually for life.

The last chapter ends with advice for helping children and young adults during these socially turbulent times. “How Should we Respond? A Call to Respect” is a chapter that parents, teachers, and church leaders will find especially helpful. No matter who we encounter and whatever has been done to their bodies, we must respect their dignity as persons created by God, believing that the Lord is able to rescue also those who have transgendered. Cases are related of what God has done to help such people. There is a call to action, because Sharon James believes that “we can stand in unity with those who demand freedom to speak the truth and refuse to be bullied into going along with” the nonsense of these anti-scriptural social changes. Among others, she mentions the well-known Toronto Professor Jordan Peterson as an example (p. 87).

Before finishing this review, my email inbox contained a newsletter, “Books at a Glance” (a conservative Christian book review newsletter; June 2/21), where Sharon James was interviewed and thanked for “a really helpful little book,” which has already been “translated into German, Spanish, and Romanian,” and is highly recommended as a Christian handbook on this social and cultural phenomenon. This reviewer agrees. 

\*Critical theory is a Marxist approach to social philosophy that focuses on reflective assessment and critique of society and culture in order to reveal and challenge power structures. [Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Critical_theory) (June 6, 2021).

*This book and others may be purchased in Canada at Reformed Book Services in Brantford, Ontario, and at Reformation Heritage Books, Grand Rapids, Michigan, U.S.A.*



## RELATIONSHIPS (2):

## HAPPILY MARRIED

READ: GENESIS 24:50-67

When Dr. Abraham Kuyper was still a minister of the main Dutch Reformed Church (NHK), he once said that the Secession of 1834 was “diseased in its root.” He meant that its beginning and basis were wrong. (Of course, he had to revise his view when he left the Dutch Reformed Church in the Doleantie and sought union with the Secessionist brothers.) I had to think of his comment when I wrote the title “Happily Married.” How many couples cannot say they are “happily married”? Sometimes marriage problems are attributed to a gradual growing apart from each other during marriage. But could it not be that this growing apart has a root problem present already at the beginning of such a marriage? How did this couple enter marriage? Was the relationship with the Lord present in the beginning and the secret of such a marriage? The marriage of Isaac and Rebekah highlights the importance of that relationship with the Lord.

**A Spiritual Tone**

God’s hand of providence crowned Abraham’s servant’s search with success. This servant found Rebekah as a willing and suitable wife for Isaac. Decisive in this choice of her was not simply her outward beauty (v.16), but her character. As one expositor notes, Rebekah showed the disposition of Christ in her dealings with this servant.

This whole account has a spiritual tone. This tone is already present at the beginning with Abraham’s desire to keep the spirit of Canaan outside the doors of his home by not having Isaac marry a Canaanite. Abraham’s servant also goes about his search in a spiritual way of prayerful dependence on God (vv.12,21, 26). At the same time, we must add that not everyone who mentions God’s name in this passage appears so spiritual. Rebekah’s money-hungry brother, Laban, also speaks of the Lord’s doings (v.50), but seems to be talking along with others for ulterior motives, rather than out of a spiritual-mindedness. This difference is important for us personally. Does what we say come out of our heart or do we just talk along with others about God and His grace for other reasons?

Thankfully, both Isaac and Rebekah were spiritually minded. We see this in Rebekah’s readiness to go with the servant without delay. This willingness is significant in light of the impact which emigration to Canaan would have on her relationship with her family. She agreed to do something that would have many consequences and she was ready to leave all that was familiar to her within 24 hours. In this willingness we see something of what Psalm 45 would later proclaim:

O Royal Bride, give heed,  
And to my words attend;  
For Christ the King forsake the world.  
And ev’ry former friend. (Psalter number 125:1)

**A Taste of Paradise**

Rebekah had what could be called a “holy haste.” How different this is from the “unholy haste” of some (young) people who steal in advance what God

has reserved to be enjoyed within marriage. Such haste is one of the ways a marriage can be so damaged from its beginning. This root can produce guilt, tensions in marriage, struggles in intimacy, and/or the sense of being used by one's spouse. Rebekah and Isaac are an example to us in how they related to each other during and after their first meeting. Instead of uncovering herself, she covered herself until the moment that she became Isaac's wife. Isaac also first took her to be his wife and then showed her love also in an intimate way.

Is such a method old-fashioned and prudish? No, it is a taste of paradise on earth. Just think of how the first couple came together in Paradise (Gen. 2:24). In the keeping of God's commandments is great reward and blessing, still today.

We also read of how Isaac prepared for marriage in a spiritual way. Rebekah first saw him meditating, or as it can also be translated, praying, in the field. Throughout the book of Genesis, Isaac comes across as a man of not so many words to people, but as a man familiar with his prayer closet, as we will explore in our next Bible study. Sometimes that prayer closet was an open field. How good it is to find opportunity to speak with the Lord in different places and times. How blessed it is if you are inclined to speak to Him about great spiritual needs and ordinary details of life, as well as your plans and desires concerning your relationship with others. Communion with God, as Isaac was engaged in at "eventide," is also a taste of paradise. Adam and Eve walked with God in the cool of the day (Gen. 3:8).

### A Blessed Marriage

The first meeting that Rebekah had with Isaac was the preparation for a blessed marriage. Their marriage was not perfect, as we will see in another study. But the foundation of their marriage was good, and therefore its beginning was good as well.

Look at what verse 67 states about Isaac: he loved his wife. What does that involve? The world sings its own version of "I love you." Often, in reality, love is a camouflaged form of egoism and self-gratification. In the Bible, love involves seeking the good of the other. True love heeds the call of Ephesians 5:2: "walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us." Love is other-directed, unconditional, and self-denying. The call to love your wife as Christ loved His bride gives a husband a lot of home-work. As the classic form for marriage puts it, love involves him "instruct-


ing, comforting, protecting her," loving her as his own body, and dwelling "with her as a man of understanding, giving honour to the wife as the weaker vessel." What a high calling this is in a time when the common question is: How do I get what I want in my relationship with others?

What can we learn about Rebekah? In many ways, she took the place that had been occupied by Isaac's mother. This occurred literally, when Isaac brought her into Sarah's tent to live there, and relationally in their subsequent life together. That process is biblical and healthy. Some marriages are overshadowed for even decades by the ongoing domineering of parents on their married children. You might think: But didn't Abraham play a great role in the arranging of this marriage? Yes, he did, but that only makes it the more noteworthy that, at the end of this chapter, Abraham is not mentioned at all.

### Consult the Advocate!

A study of this passage gives us many larger and smaller lessons that help us see what being happily married involves. This passage calls us to go through life seeking and depending on God's guidance (Isaac) and bowing in submission to God's will (Rebekah). It shows us the importance of not only becoming physically one, but also being grounded together on the same spiritual foundation.

Those who have struggled in their marriage and are not enjoying a "happy marriage" may be tempted to go to a lawyer (*advocaat* in Dutch). However, the Bible has better advice. Go with your questions and your marriage relationship that may have run stuck to the

throne of grace. At the right hand of the Father is the Lord Jesus Christ, the heavenly Advocate. He has grace for you to seek and find. Amid the present ruins and ruinous past sins, He has grace. He has grace to not only pardon, but also teach to love one another as Christ loves His sinful bride. If you fear that your situation is totally hopeless, know that this Advocate specializes in hopeless cases. His Word testifies of that reality and history confirms it. He has not lost one of His cases! 

*Rev. A. van der Zwan serves the Christelijk Gereformeerde Kerk of Dordrecht-Centre in the Netherlands. This Bible Study was taken with permission from De Wekker (March 5, 2021), the bi-weekly periodical of our sister churches in the Netherlands.*

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

**01** Reflect on how spiritual things enter your conversations with others. Do you ever spontaneously direct the conversation to God or do you only speak of Him in response to others?

**02** Is it exaggeration to say that our relationship with the Lord should have a place in our daily contact with others? Give some other Biblical examples of those who had to leave their familiar environment to follow God's call to them. What does God call us to forsake today? Think of the Baptism Form's reference to forsaking the world.

**03** In many ethical discussions today, the statement is made that we should not spend much time appealing to creation-ordinances contained in Genesis 1-2. How do you respond to this pressure? What is the risk in letting our current culture provide us with standards for our (marriage) relationships?

**04** How can we take the Lord Jesus as an example in the way we relate to others?

**05** Do you believe that there are not hopeless cases for the Lord Jesus, also regarding ruined relationships? What is the relationship between praying for His help and seeking help from counsellors, etc?



ORDINATION AND INAUGURATION SERVICE OF  
**Dr. David H. Kranendonk**  
 AS PROFESSOR OF THEOLOGY



**ABOVE:**  
 Dr. Selderhuis  
 Congratulatory  
 Speech for Dr.  
 Kranendonk.

On June 18, 2021, Rev. Kranendonk was installed as Professor of Theology in the Free Reformed Churches during a special worship service under the auspices of the Hamilton FRC consistory on behalf of the Grand Rapids FRC, the calling church. The service was held in the Dundas FRC because of its larger size since Ontario places of worship were currently limited to a 15% capacity. Rev. J. Schoeman, as chairman of the Theological Education Committee, led the service, preaching briefly on John 7:18, focusing on an office bearer's duty to speak of God's glory and not promoting one's own self. After the reading of the Form for the Installation of Professors of Theology, Dr. Kranendonk answered the four questions posed to him with a "Yes, with all my heart". Hereby he was installed in the fourth office, the other ones being pastor, elder, and deacon. Professor Kranendonk spoke on Christ's charge to the seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3, emphasizing the need to "hear what the Spirit saith to the churches". As professor of the FRCNA, the entire denomination is now his congregation. Rev. W. Klaver read letters of welcome from the Grand Rapids FRC and Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary (PRTS). Dr. Kranendonk closed the evening with words of thanksgiving, in the first place to the Triune God<sup>1</sup>.



Pastor Schoeman



Dr. Kranendonk

On April 19, 2021, Rev. Kranendonk sustained a Ph.D. examination led by his promotor, Dr. Herman Selderhuis, who is the current rector of the Theological University in Apeldoorn, The Netherlands, the seminary of our sister churches, the *Christeli-*

*jke Gereformeerde Kerken*. The thesis was *Paul Baynes's Pastoral Teaching of Predestination*. See a summary of the thesis in the box on page 17. Due to COVID restrictions, the "promotion" unfortunately had to take place over Zoom. As a result, some of the formality and solemnity of such a promotion was lost. Several men, known to many of us, participated in the interesting examination, such as Dr. W. Van Vlastuin and Dr. M. Kater.

In September 2020, the FRCNA synod decided to appoint Rev. Kranendonk as professor and offered him to PRTS. At their May 2021 synod of the HRC unanimously and joyfully accepted the FRCNA offer and hired Dr. Kranendonk as professor at PRTS. His work will be split between teaching and spiritual counselling to the students. In this latter role, he will be assisting Dr. M. Kelderman, the current Dean of Students and Spiritual Formation.

May the Head of the Church, the Lord Jesus Christ, grace our dear brother Kranendonk with love, wisdom, humility, faithfulness, and fruitfulness to the well-being of the seminary students, our denominations, and the world-wide church! <sup>1</sup>

**Endnotes**

1 This worship service can be watched at [sermonaudio.com](http://sermonaudio.com)

*Connor Keuning, Member of the Theological Education Committee and Trustee of the Board of PRTS on behalf of the FRC.*

# PRESENTATION OF DISSERTATION AT ITS DEFENCE

Esteemed rector, senate, professors, and all present, I am humbled to have this opportunity to present my dissertation on Paul Baynes's Pastoral Teaching of Predestination. This topic arose out of a course on the doctrine of predestination in the post-Reformation era at Calvin Theological Seminary. Much scholarship presented this era as dominated by a pastorally stifling and scholastically abstract doctrine of predestination. The desire to explore the pastoral use of this doctrine led me to study the ministry of Elnathan Parr. He was an early 17<sup>th</sup> century conforming clergyman who even put a lengthy defence of the infralapsarian position in his catechism. I found that his development of predestination, coupled with his pastoral concern for the salvation and edification of his hearers, resists the caricature of Reformed Scholasticism being a cold and speculative system. But this study raised the question: "Perhaps this conforming infralapsarian was of the "milder sort," but how did a university based, non-conforming, supralapsarian direct follower of William Perkins teach predestination? This led me to Paul Baynes. He fit these qualifications. And the subtitle of his massive commentary on Ephesians 1 is: "*Wherein, besides the text fruitfully explained: some principall controuersies about predestination are handled, and diuers arguments of Arminius are examined.*" How would he teach predestination?

Baynes produced thousands of pages of writings, but no monograph has ever been written on him. His spiritual father, William Perkins, and spiritual son, Richard Sibbes, are much better known. As the first monograph on him, this study explores his life within its academic, ecclesiastical, and theological context to show he was deeply rooted in the Puritan tradition of Reformed orthodoxy and committed to the very Church of England which silenced him as a preacher. His silencing after preaching a visitation sermon in Cambridge was not so much due to nonconformity, much less a predestinarian radicalness, but his passion for a faithful pastoral ministry. His writings reflect a concern to serve the spiritual welfare of those around him in whatever capacity he could, whether in catechising,

counselling, providing spiritual guides, or preaching.

His practice is undergirded by his teaching concerning pastoral ministry. He saw it as the exercise of those called and equipped by God to bring especially the fundamental truths of his Word home to the hearts and lives of their flocks. His visitation sermon pleads for pastoral ministries that feed flocks with what the Heidelberg Catechism has identified as the three things we need to know to live and die happily. These main lines of Scripture are to be set within and reflect the whole counsel of God. As an aspect of that whole counsel, predestination is not to be ignored or resisted, but received as part God's revelation given for the church's edification and God's glory. As such, it is to be handled with reverence and unto edification.

My most surprising discovery was the amount of writing he dedicated to predestination. I originally thought to structure my study by the various genres of his writings: catechetical instruction, devotional guides, letters, sermons, commentaries, and polemical writings. I soon had to abandon that plan because he hardly even uses the terms "elect" or "reprobate" in several genres. This loud silence indicates predestination did not have a dominating role in his teaching, contrary to the persistence of some scholarly assumptions. This discovery highlights the value of examining one theme in the whole of one pastor's writings, rather than culling quotations from a wide range of authors on a given theme.

This paucity raises the question of whether Baynes was afraid of teaching his convictions concerning predestination. However, his commentary on Ephesians does treat predestination in depth where the Scripture text itself speaks of it. He develops the doctrine of predestination from the specific passage he is exegeting, using scholarly tools with sanctified reason, conferring with the text's immediate linguistic context, and taking into consideration the broader scope of the book and Scripture, in dialogue with exegetical traditions. As such, he does not treat texts on predestination differently from texts on other doctrines. <sup>11</sup>

## FREE REFORMED SYNOD 2021

Our annual synodical meetings have been rescheduled for September 8-10, 2021 with a prayer service on Tuesday September 7 at 7:30 PM (the day after Labour day). Details to follow.

## CALL ACCEPTED

Pastor Ian Macleod of the Grand Rapids Free Reformed Church has accepted the call extended to him by the Tillsonburg Heritage Reformed Congregation. He and his family hope to move to Tillsonburg this summer. We give thanks to the Lord for the ways in which he was enabled to serve in our denomination, both in pulpit ministry and committee work, commend him to the God of grace as he anticipates shepherding another flock, and trust the bonds established with him will continue in the future.

## CHANGE OF ADDRESS

**Pastor David & Elly  
Kranendonk**  
4980 Lofting Drive NE  
Belmont, MI  
49306  
Email: [kranendonk@frcna.org](mailto:kranendonk@frcna.org)  
Cell: 616-290-4125



# WORD & DEED

PRAY for our partners  
 SPONSOR a child  
 JOIN a business group  
 PARTICIPATE in a fundraiser



## OUR MISSION

To help meet the spiritual and physical needs of people in the developing world in accordance with biblical principles for the glory of God.

[www.wordanddeed.org](http://www.wordanddeed.org)

## OBITUARY

### LAMMIGJE VLIETSTRA

(nee Hagen)

On the morning of Sunday, May 16, 2021, (four days after her 98<sup>th</sup> birthday), the Lord took to Himself our dearly beloved mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, and great-great-grandmother. She was predeceased by **Berend**, her dear husband of 72 years, on November 25, 2020. Loving mother of :



**Albert, Grace (the late Ray Halma), Jake (Lona), Trina, Wilma, Conrad (Teresa), Bernie (Arlene), Fred (Betty), Martin (Yvonne), Peter (Marlene), Trudy (Harry), and James.**

Beloved grandmother of 41 grandchildren, 98 great-grandchildren, and 3 great-great-grandchildren. Lammigje was predeceased by her great-granddaughter, Charlotte Stewart.

A private funeral service was held at the Ebenezer Free Reformed Church, Dundas with Pastor L. Bilkes officiating, preceded by a private burial at the St. George Cemetery.

All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. John 6:37.

Baynes reserves his most detailed development of the doctrine of predestination for academic discussions which he embeds as excurses within his commentary on Ephesians 1. Here he clarifies his understanding of predestination through polemical engagement with Arminians, as well as infralapsarians and those who go no further than saying God permitted the fall. His teaching of predestination shows that he paid attention to his audience, omitting predestination in his teaching of fundamental doctrines at a catechetical level and delving into the details of predestination at a university level.

This teaching raises the question of whether he avoided teaching predestination at a popular level out of fear of its pastoral consequences as much scholarship claims occurred. In reality, Baynes was convinced that this doctrine was especially comforting and doxological. While he recognized the problem of assurance, it does not dominate his pastoral applications. Instead, most of his applications presuppose the presence of a measure of assurance of election.



His uses of predestination contain warnings about misusing, resisting, and misunderstanding the teaching of predestination. These were not given to instill fear of reprobation, but warn against paralyzing despair and careless presumption in a way that directed his hearers to God. He also has many exhortations flowing from the very doctrine of predestination. Some are gospel calls, but most are calls to sanctification. Rather than driving hearers to sanctification by the fear of reprobation, he motivates to it by the knowledge of election in Christ. The most striking element of his uses of predestination, when compared to his uses of other doctrines, is the prominence of the themes of comfort amid outward afflictions and the spiritual warfare and ultimately the theme of doxology. Since predestination is to God's glory, a knowledge of it must end in God's glory. Thus, rather than being a doctrine that drives people away from God and into despair, fatalism, or God-ignoring presumption, this doctrine leads to the triune God.

This study then of Paul Baynes's pastoral teaching of predestination demonstrates his use of various scholarly tools to teach the doctrine of predestination when it was present in a text in order to convey its pastoral benefit, especially to believers. The weight of this doctrine within his whole corpus shows he did not let it dominate his teaching, and the pastoral uses of this doctrine demonstrate he was convinced of its pastoral value. This doctrine functioned, as did other doctrines, in accordance with his view of pastoral ministry as teaching and applying the Word of God for the benefit of the church and the glory of God.

*Thank-you.*



Dear friends and members of our Free Reformed Churches, It is so encouraging these days to see that some of the restrictions caused by this unprecedented pandemic are being rolled back. There are still people who are not comfortable with the virus-related threats, but things seem to be on the right track for normalcy, for which our thanksgiving is abundantly due unto our merciful Father, God the Healer (Psalm 103:3).

I give thanks to God most for what He is doing with the FRC US Urban Missions for the last two years and a half. There were some unforeseen difficulties, but what God does in time is for our further sanctification, even COVID-19 (Genesis 50:20). I am continuing with my preaching commitment for the English-speaking group in a Korean congregation at Parsippany, N.J. Starting from last May, we were finally able to begin our in-person gathering. The early morning prayer meeting continues at 6 am. I got to know Elder Choi from this prayer group, and it is my joy to make myself available for him to render any service after the morning prayer, whether it is a vehicle ride or computer software problems. He is as old as my grandfather would be if he were still alive.

There was an outdoor service and fellowship for the Korean congregation on the last Sunday of June. After about 15 months of disruption of fellowship, some of the church members could feel more comfort and warmth over a meal and fellowship opportunity. It was an unusually warm day, but it was not able to overcome our desire for worship and fellowship in Christ.


Every Thursday morning, about 20 men join each other for a time of intense physical exercise by playing soccer. It started as a group of Korean pastors playing indoor soccer at one of the Korean church buildings during the pandemic here in N.J. Recently, they could resume this gathering as the pandemic regulations are gradually done away with. About half of these men are Korean pastors working in the local churches in New Jersey and I found it to be a very challenging yet beneficial fel-

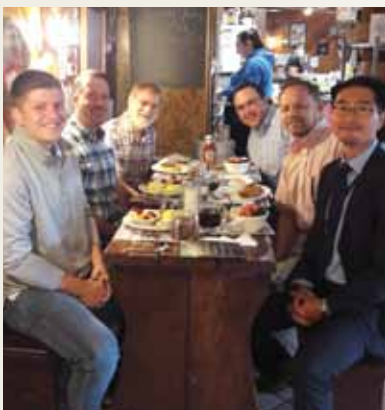
lowship opportunity. After the exercise, we also study Homiletics together to reinforce our calling as fellow pastors in the same area.

During the month of June, there were also very helpful and inspiring meetings with the Pompton Plains Evangelism Committee members. The Chairman, Mr. Duane Rogers, invited Rev. Steve Hofmaier from Trinity Baptist Church, Montville, N.J. to our small Friday breakfast meeting to hear from his experienced cross-cultural missionary vantage point. He worked as a missionary many years in the Philippines and God blessed his church planting/mission work there. The following week we gathered again to discuss ways to make our current ministry website effective and more useful.

I also had a chance to join Mr. John Touw and his wife Barbara for their weekly Wednesday evangelism ministry at Bethel Ranch in northern New Jersey. Mr. Touw has been doing this ministry for many years as a layman evangelist with his dear wife's relentless support for a couple of decades. May God grant this faithful brother strength and joy for this important ministry.

We are thankful that the Lord provided us with a future home in a new location. It is about 20 miles toward the east from where we have been since we moved out here from Michigan. More details will follow with this new development. One extraordinary aspect of becoming a missionary is to always follow the Holy Spirit. We believe that this is a very timely step toward the goal of the urban missions. Please pray for a smooth and safe transition for our family, including my wife's needs and our children's education.

The FRC US Urban Missions Summer Camp will continue this summer. Toward the end of July, there will be a two-night and three-day summer camp in one of the campground locations in Pennsylvania, Lord willing. Please pray for God's blessing upon this gathering in Christ (Genesis 12:3). 





**ANNIVERSARY**

1966 August 27 2021

*Psalm 91:1 "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty."*

With great joy and thanksgiving, we announce the **55th Wedding Anniversary** of our dear parents, grandparents and great-grandparents.



**GEORGE & JANE NEVEN**

(nee Brunsveld)

We pray that God will continue to bless and lead you in the years to come. We are thankful for your love and care to each one of us.

**Jackie and John Jonkman**

Kelly-Ann and David Vlietstra  
Rachelle and Cameron Overbeeke  
Kayla and Mitchell Overbeeke  
Laura and Brandon Pennings  
Jolene

**Steven and Connie Neven**

Stephanie and Brayden Stryker  
Jessica and Tanner Noordam (boyfriend)  
Joshua and Emma Brokking (girlfriend)  
Danielle

**Connie and Gerald Kroesbergen**

Jeffrey and Katie Kroesbergen  
Gerald and Amy Kroesbergen  
Kevin  
Scott and Rose Kroesbergen  
Lisa and Jake Elgersma (boyfriend)  
Brent  
Andrew

**Lynda and Michael Hamstra**

Jaden and Amber Brokking (girlfriend)  
Mariah, Chad, Chase, Preston, Deyonna

**James and Corrie Neven**

Chiara, Jaxon, Jordan, Julian

**Greg and Shalena Neven**

Alanna, Morgan, Eden, Adelaide

And 9 great-grandchildren

**Home address:**

3004 Governors Rd, RR2 Lynden ON L0R 1T0  
email: george.neven@icloud.com

**ANNIVERSARY**

1971 August 14 2021

*"but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD." Joshua 24:15b*



With much joy and thankfulness to God, we wish to announce the **50th Wedding Anniversary** of

**JERRY & TRUDY HAMSTRA**

It is our hope and prayer that God will continue to bless and keep them in His love and care. With much love from your children, grandchildren, and great-grandchild.

**Alison & Mark Pennings**

Andrea & Peter Koopman (Liam)  
Daniel, Nathan

**Michael & Lynda Hamstra**

Jaden & Amber (girlfriend)  
Mariah, Chad, Chase, Preston,  
Deyonna

**Joel & Rachel Hamstra**

Connor & Tianna (girlfriend)  
Meaghan, Ashleigh, Sean, Ryan

Always remembered and loved is their dear daughter **Andrea** who passed away in her infancy. (1972)

**Home Address:**

1343 Conc. 6 West,  
Millgrove ON L8B 1N5  
[jthamstra@gmail.com](mailto:jthamstra@gmail.com) (??)

**ANNIVERSARY**

1981 - June - 2021

*Phil. 4:19 "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."*

With joy and thanksgiving to the Lord, we announce the **40th Wedding Anniversary** of our parents and grandparents



**LEO & BETTY-ANNE VANDERMAAREL**

We pray that the Lord will continue to bless you in the years to come! With much love from all of us:

**Leanne & Jeff Otten** (Wellandport, ON)

Isaac, Curtis, Amy-Rae, Nigel

**Brad & Meagan Vandermaarel** (Brantford, ON)

Mia, Gabriel, Asher, Keira, Eliana

**Adam & Kristen Vandermaarel** (Lynden, ON)

Ezra, Eden, Sophie

**Shannon & Lawrence Pennings** (Brantford, ON)

Ryan

**Owen & Kristen Vandermaarel** (St. Catharines, ON)

**Courtney & Ben Pennings** (Wellandport, ON)

Everly, Aurora

**Home Address:**

25 Pace Ave., Brantford, ON N3S 7V4

**Give the gift of reading with Open Windows!**

Open children's minds to history, vocations, music, the Bible, creation, art, and countries around the world. With stories, a meditation, puzzles, colouring contests, and book reviews, it's a magazine for the home, school, libraries, and outreach. For ages 4-12.



**\$21.00 annually, 6 issues per year**

Print subscription form at  
[openwindows.frcna.org](http://openwindows.frcna.org)  
or contact  
[administrator@frcna.org](mailto:administrator@frcna.org)