

REFLECTIONS

Grace OPC

REFORMATION 2011

By Pastor Brian De Jong

*Ecclesia reformata
semper reformanda
secundum verbum Dei!*

This Latin phrase is translated into English as “The church reformed and always being reformed according to the word of God.”

Admittedly this slogan has become a catchphrase for liberal denominations, post Vatican II Roman Catholics, and more recently the ‘emergent church’ crowd to justify their peculiar theological permutations.

Despite some dubious uses of the slogan, it remains descriptive of the heart of the Protestant Reformation. I say that for three reasons, and the first is because we are “ecclesia reformata” – the church reformed. We stand by those doctrines and teachings of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that found expression in the writings of Luther and Calvin, of the Synod of Dordrecht and the Westminster Assembly.

Specifically, we are committed to the full authority of Scripture, to the sovereignty of the Triune God, to the person and work of Christ, to justification by grace alone through faith alone. We still believe that Jesus Christ is the Lord of heaven and earth, and that He rules His kingdom by His word and Spirit. We hold dear what our spiritual forefathers taught us, and we have been “reformed”

from the corruptions of medieval Roman Catholicism.

A second reason we still hold this slogan to be true is that we are “semper reformanda” – always reforming. We dare not rest on our laurels and coast into eternity.

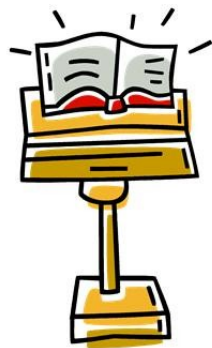
We confess that “*The purest churches under heaven are subject both to mixture and error*” (WCF 25.5) We can’t deceive ourselves into thinking we’ve arrived at the pinnacle of Christian perfection, and have neither faults nor flaws. There is plenty of work yet to be done, and Christ will return before everything that should be addressed is fully addressed. Like John Calvin, we always are aware of the need for further, fuller and deeper reformation. We

yearn for time, energy, opportunity and the blessing of God to renovate the household of faith.

But the last part of the slogan is perhaps the most crucial. Understandably, it is the part most often neglected or forgotten by modern sloganeers - “secundum Verbum Dei.” According to the word of God. We were originally reformed and are currently reforming according to God’s word. Mere human opinion carries no weight with us. We want to be a truly Biblical church – both in broad brushstrokes and in the minutiae and details of our faith and life.

Again, the Westminster Assembly spoke well when they insisted that...

...concluded on Back Page



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Mnemonics...

- *Hospitality Sunday, 16th*
- *Reformation Conference, 29-30th*

A Visit to Japan

by Pam Schlernizauer

Our first view of Sendai, Japan, was of the Uomotos waving and smiling to us from the waiting room beyond the baggage claim area where we were happily retrieving our luggage. What a welcome sight to see their familiar faces after the 16 hour trip from Chicago, during which time the sun never set. We later learned that this is the hospitable Japanese way to both welcome and say farewell to guests-waving and smiling until the visitor is either in the home or departed out of sight.

We noticed another Japanese custom as we checked into the Super Hotel in downtown Sendai and got to choose pillows, night shirts and for the ladies, “amenities”, in the hotel lobby. The next morning we were surprised to see some of the male guests arriving in the hotel restaurant for breakfast in their hotel-issued nightshirt! At our hotel we were also introduced to the Japanese preoccupation with footwear. We were to take off our shoes in the entrance area of our room and step into provided slippers in the inner room, all without letting our feet touch the outer floor. The process was reversed on the way out. Imagine our surprise as we visited private homes and churches to find out that one is also expected to change into separate bathroom slippers as well when one enters the restroom! (No one seems particularly concerned how many or who has worn the communal slippers provided.)

Perhaps it has something to do with the fact that the Japanese live in such small spaces compared to American standards, but they are extremely neat. The outside - inside principle applies not only to shoes but also to suitcases, which are not to touch the inside floor but be placed on newspapers to avoid outside contamination. At the end of the church services both at Megumi Chapel, which also serves as the Uomoto's home, and the 100- year- old Sendai Church, the congregations immediately turned into a Service Master crew. Out came the vacuum cleaners and dust

rags as many set to cleaning the entire interior of the church. People did stand around and visit but had to make way for the vacuum cord.

Another trait of the Japanese is that everyone goes at a run, and things are done as fast as possible. This was illustrated one evening in downtown Sendai when Murray wanted to get a charger for a cell phone for volunteers from a store that was to close in 15 minutes. After parking at the Sendai Station, Murray took off, leaving us a block behind. We finally caught up, and did get the charger.

Things are also very automated in Japan, including trains, subways, and even toilets, which have many strange buttons written in Japanese. We were afraid to touch those buttons for fear of what might happen.

During the seminars that Don and I led at the Sendai Reformed Theological Institute, another Japanese trait was very readily apparent. All of the attendees seemed to pay perfect attention and to take extensive notes. Now that is taking courtesy to an extreme! We happened to be in Japan during the days when they “honor the elderly”. One of the benefits we received was a 2/3's discount at a restaurant for being over 65. They did make us prove it by having us show our passports. I guess that was another example of courtesy to the extreme!

Christians world-wide show their love with smiles; in Japan they also communicate with bows upon meeting one another. We were surprised by how interactive the Japanese are. Besides smiling and bowing, they take time to talk to each other for a respectable period no matter how busy they may be. We were impressed by the number of friendships the Uomotos have cultivated, always praying some will offer opportunities to share Christ in this secular culture. In Japan less than 1 per cent are Christian, and most people are completely ignorant of Christianity. In such a setting it takes great faith on the part of our missionaries to continue sowing the



Japan Concluded...

precious seed of the gospel, trusting in the Lord of the Harvest to bring forth His fruit in due season! We felt privileged to try to encourage them in their labors and motivated to pray more fervently for an awakening to come to the Japanese people. The

many differences we saw in the Japanese culture quickly fade to nothing when you experience the bond of unity in the body of Christ. Don and I are very grateful for God providing us with this rich experience.

Reformation Conference 2011

This year's **Reformation Conference** will be held on Saturday, October 29th and Sunday, October 30th. The speaker this year will be the Rev. Alan Strange. He will be speaking on the following topics:

Saturday Morning

9:00-10:15 a.m.

The Composition and Work of the Westminster Assembly

10:30-11:45 a.m.

The Life and Work of J. Gresham Machen

He will also preach for us on Sunday. His topics are...

Morning Sermon - Renewal in the Church

Evening Sermon - Renewal through the means of grace



October Birthdays



Got Leaves?

You don't have anywhere to put your leaves this fall? Our gardeners do - just drop them off by the shed or call Gail Moody to pick them up - we will put them in our garden!!





Grace OPC

October 2011

*Showing forth the
excellencies of
Jesus Christ*



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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m. Theology, 3:30 p.m.	4	5 Prayer Meeting, 7:00 p.m.	6	7	8
9 Missions Sunday Rev. Victor Atallah (p.m.)	10 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m. Pine Haven Study, 1:30 p.m.	11 Session Meeting, 6:30 p.m.	12 Prayer Meeting, 7:00 p.m.	13	14	15
16 Hospitality Sunday	17 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m. Theology, 3:30 p.m. Pine Haven at Pizza Ranch, 4:30-8 p.m.	18	19 Prayer Meeting, 7:00 p.m.	20	21	22
23	24 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m. Pine Haven Study, 1:30 p.m.	25	26 Prayer Meeting, 7:00 p.m.	27	28	29 Reformation Conference: 9-10:15 a.m. 10:30-11:45 a.m.
30 Reformation Con. Lord's Supper, (p.m.)	31 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m. Theology, 3:30 p.m.					

Women's Presbyterial

September 24, 2011

by Carla De Master

What do Cyberspace and the Brazil Uruguay border have to do with each other? They were both topics at the Women's Presbyterial in Janesville on Saturday. Four of us had the privilege and fun of being with over 30 women and girls from the midwest presbytery. Brunch was delicious, served when we arrived and lunch abundant. The men of Christ OPC cooked, served, and cleaned up. Girls came with their moms, there were teenagers there and young moms. The loving hospitality was felt.

Rev. Chuck Muether, from Hope OPC in Pella, IA spoke on Separating the Electronic Wheat from the Chaff of Cyber Ministry and Social Networking. Using a power point presentation he covered the topics of Internet Cyber History, Reformed Repository, Blogging, Faceless Fellowship, Electronic Faith, Cyber Courting. Beginning with predictions by Aldous Huxley and George Orwell the history lesson also contained the balance of Jeremiah 9:23-24: "Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom or the strong man boast of his strength or the rich man boast of his riches, but let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight." declares the Lord. Much boasting is done on Facebook, blogging and others.

Using a fake young woman, Patricia C. McIntosh, Pastor Muether told of things that could affect her for good or bad as she seeks to understand "reformed." Some good sites were Modem Reformation Magazine, Culture and the Reformed Faith, White Horse Inn, Spindle Works (Canada), Third Millennium, Center of Reformed Theology, Fire Breathing Christian (Calvinism in your face), Heritage Reformed (Joel Beeke), OPC website, and Sermon Audio. Be careful following bloggers. Be

careful being a blogger. "A Little Knowledge is a dangerous thing, so is a lot." Albert Einsein

Ask Phyllis, Kate, Ellen or me why face to face fellowship and preaching from the word, week by week is better than a "cyber church." Maybe you already know the answer!!! As for Cyber Courting, some good websites are Sovereign Grace Singles and (Maybe) Reformed singles.com. Fathers should be involved in their daughters' use of these....



Presbyterial Concluded...

Comments on Finance

by Joel Moody

General Fund receipts for August totaled \$12,089.05 as compared to the budget of \$11,709.61, while General Fund disbursements for August totaled \$12,714.34. August year to date General Fund receipts totaled \$102,870.80 as compared to the budget of \$102,459.14 (an excess of \$411.66), while August year to date disbursements of \$95,651.95 were \$6,807.19 below budget. Through the end of August, the General Fund has increased by \$7,413.09. The increase in the General Fund was mostly due to a shortfall in disbursements as compared to the budget. General Fund receipts through August were 3.1% above last year's total while disbursements were 1.8% above the prior year.

Benevolence Fund Receipts for August totaled \$1,526.50 as compared to the budget of \$1,483.33. Year to date benevolence receipts through August totaled \$10,271.25, while the budget amount was \$11,866.67 (a shortfall of \$1,595.42). Each month, \$475.00 is sent to Worldwide Outreach for the Gen-

eral Missions outreach of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. In addition, \$200.00 is sent each month to the Midwest Presbytery's Church Extension Committee. During October, \$900.00 is scheduled to be disbursed to Sheboygan County Christian High School and \$600.00 to Pine Haven Christian Home.

Giving for the Capital Expansion Project through August has reached \$54,781.41. The outstanding Mortgage and Promissory Notes balance was \$89,051.22 as of the end of August 2011. Assuming that mortgage payments continue to be made as scheduled, the mortgage will be paid off near the end of 2012. The promissory notes have specific terms of repayment for each particular note and we plan to pay those back accordingly.

From May through August of the current year, \$366.39 was collected from Sunday School offerings and \$102.90 was collected during Vacation Bible School. The combined total of \$469.29 was directed for disaster relief in Japan.

Special Sunday Speaker

Rev. Victor Atallah will be preach at Grace Church on the evening of October 9th. Rev. Atallah is the General Director of MERF (Middle East Reformed Fellowship), headquartered at the John Calvin Center in Larnaca, Cyprus and sharing the Gospel with those in the Middle

East, North Africa, Indonesia, Pakistan, Nigeria, Somalia, and Tanzania.



Pine Haven at Pizza Ranch

The Pine Haven Women's Auxiliary will be serving at the Pizza Ranch, in Oostburg, on Monday, October 17, from 4:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. Please come and let us serve you. Proceeds will be used for various projects to benefit the residents of the Pine Haven Christian Communities.



Sausage Stuffed Jalapenos



“The eyes
of all look
to You,
And You
give them
their food in
due time.
You open
Your hand
And satisfy
the desire of
every living
thing.”

- ★ 1 lb. ground pork sausage
 - ★ 1 (8 oz.) package cream cheese, softened
 - ★ 1 cup shredded Parmesan cheese
 - ★ 1 lb. (22) large fresh jalapeno peppers, halved lengthwise & seeded (remember to wear gloves while cutting them!)
 - ★ 1 (8 oz.) bottle of Ranch dressing
1. Preheat oven to 425°.
 2. Place sausage in a skillet over medium heat, and cook until evenly brown. Drain grease.
 3. In a bowl, mix the sausage, cream cheese, and Parmesan cheese. spoon about 1 tablespoon sausage mixture into each jalapeno half. Arrange stuffed halves in baking dishes. Bake 15-20 minutes in the preheated oven, until bubbly and lightly browned. Serve with Ranch dressing.

New Baby

Ivan and Carla DeMaster announce the birth of grandson, Aleksandr Raymond VanDerPuy, son of Tom and Ruth (our daughter) VanDerPuy. He was born Sunday at 7 a.m., weighing 8#2, 22" long. God is good!!!





Showing forth the excellencies of Jesus Christ

Grace OPC

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Spurgeon Corner

Grace & Glory

*“He will give grace & glory.”
(Psalm 84:11)*

Bounteous is Jehovah in his nature; to give is his delight. His gifts are beyond measure precious, and are as freely given as the light of the sun. He gives **grace** to his elect because he wills it, to his redeemed because of his covenant, to the called because of his promise, to believers because they seek it, to sinners because they need it. He gives **grace** abundantly, seasonably, constantly, readily, sovereignly; doubly enhancing the value of the boon by the manner of its bestowal. **Grace** in all its forms he freely renders to his people: comforting, preserving, sanctifying, directing, instructing, assisting **grace**, he generously pours into their souls without ceasing, and he always will do so, whatever may occur. Sickness may befall, but the Lord will give **grace**; poverty may happen to us, but **grace** will surely be afforded; death must come but **grace** will light a candle at the darkest hour. Reader, how blessed it is as years roll round, and the leaves begin again to fall, to enjoy such an unfading promise as this, “The Lord will give **grace**.”

The little conjunction “*and*” in this verse is a diamond rivet binding the present with the future: **grace** and **glory** always go together. God has married them, and none can divorce them. The Lord will never deny a soul **glory** to whom he has freely given to live upon his **grace**; indeed, **glory** is nothing more than **grace** in its Sabbath dress, **grace** in full bloom, **grace** like autumn fruit, mellow and perfected. How soon we may have **glory** none can tell! It may be before this month of October has run out we shall see the Holy City; but be the interval longer or shorter, we shall be glorified ere long. **Glory**, the **glory** of heaven, the **glory** of eternity, the **glory** of Jesus, the **glory** of the Father, the Lord will surely give to his chosen. Oh, rare promise of a faithful God!

Two golden links of one celestial chain:
Who owneth **grace** shall surely **glory** gain.

Evening, October 1 Morning & Evening, by C. H. SPURGEON



Front Article Concluded

“The holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the Word of God, the only rule of faith and obedience” (WLC 3) We have no other standard than God’s Word. Our beliefs, our commitments, and our practice are shaped and molded by the Scriptures alone. This suggests that the church of future generations can be more consistently Reformed than what we presently enjoy – if they will be “always reforming according to the word of

God.” May God grant us the grace to do so for generations to come!

