



RFPA update

ISSUE
23

Fall 2012

PROJECTS AND PROGRESS: OUR USE OF GOD'S GOOD GIFTS

Greetings once again to our readers and constituents! Another season has passed, bringing with it many new and exciting ventures for the Reformed Free Publishing Association. Thanks be to God for his goodness to us.

You may remember, from the last *Update*, the 5-Year Plan adopted by the board to make good use of the large gift given to us last year from a faithful reader and supporter. The plan covers a wide range of items under the categories of operations, sales and marketing, facilities, publishing, and finance. Here's a brief look at the progress of the plan in regard to the website, eSubscriptions, eBooks, and future book projects.

New Website

The RFPA website received an overhaul and the new site was launched in mid-May. The site is up and running smoothly, and we have heard some great feedback about the new look and functionality. Look up www.rfpa.org yourself and let us know what you think!

Some new features of the website include a blog, integrated social media (Twitter and Facebook), and an email newsletter subscription option, each of which were recommended to us by two consultants (both experts in their respective fields: Christian book publishing and marketing). The blog and integrated social media are tools that are designed for

easy interaction with our readers on a day to day basis. The sorts of things communicated include daily happenings in the RFPA office, upcoming book projects, book specials, occasional quotes from one of our books or the *Standard Bearer*, and more.

In addition to these new features, a mobile version of the new website is now available for smartphone and tablet users. The mobile version of the site has a similar look but is much more mobile-user friendly with large buttons (for easy touch screen use) and large text.

The *Standard Bearer* archive has been updated with a new, modern look and an improved search functionality. Some new features include: a user-friendly keyword search, keyword highlights within the search results, and search by Bible text. You will soon have the option to view each issue in PDF or FlippingBook (a neat digital magazine format in which you can turn the pages of the issue yourself and is easily viewable on a mobile device). You will soon also have the option to download individual issues of the *Standard Bearer* in eBook format to your eReaders (beginning with the July 1, 2012 issue).

eSubscriptions to the *Standard Bearer*

We are excited to now offer an eSubscription to the *Standard Bearer*! This is a great new product serving those who prefer

PROJECTS AND PROGRESS: OUR USE OF GOD'S GOOD GIFTS, cont.

digital media or who just can't wait for the hardcopy issue to land in their mailboxes. Those who eSubscribe to the *Standard Bearer* are given access to the latest issues right on our website. The latest four months worth of issues are available in PDF, eBook (beginning with the July 1, 2012 issue), and FlippingBook, giving you multiple viewing options. Those who eSubscribe must have a password to view the latest issues on our site.

The idea for an eSubscription to the *Standard Bearer* was brought to our attention by several readers who either travel often, prefer reading on their mobile devices, or are tired of waiting on tardy postal delivery to receive their hardcopies of the magazine. This product is especially great for our foreign subscribers who pay a significantly higher hardcopy subscription rate and almost always experience delivery delays due to the distance each issue travels.

An eSubscription for the *Standard Bearer* costs only \$21.00 per year and only \$10.50 if you are current hardcopy subscriber. If you have any questions about how an eSubscription works or if you'd like to order an eSubscription today, visit www.rfpa.org, call 616.457.5970, or email paula@rfpa.org.

eBooks

After working through all the technical processes, we are excited to say that a number of our books are now available in eBook format at Amazon.com, BarnesandNoble.com, and ChristianBook.com! We are currently working to incorporate eBooks on our own website for the ease of use of our readers and for the benefit of the Book Club members.

Currently, the following eight titles are available as eBooks at the vendors previously listed: *Better to Marry, Bound to Join, Communion with God, Covenant and Election in the Reformed Tradition, A Defense of the Church Institute, Federal Vision, Peace for the Troubled Heart, and Reformed Education*. The work of converting current and some out-of-print titles into eBooks is an ongoing project of the Book and *Standard Bearer* Committee and Evelyn Langerak, our book coordinator. Stay tuned for more eBook news in future RFPA *Updates*!

Book Projects in the Works

"So, what book is coming out next?" We are asked this question many, many times over the course of the year and each time this question is a huge encouragement to the board, the staff, the editors, and the authors. People are reading our books and they want more!

Earlier this year we were excited to alert the Book Club members to expect not just two or three books per year but three or four! The RFPA has reason to rejoice and thank God for his provision of authors and book projects to spread the truth of his word. We have many projects on timely topics lined up and we are eager to share them with you.

The tentative publication list for the next two years or so includes (but is not limited to) a commentary on 1 Peter by Herman Hanko entitled *A Pilgrim's Manual*, a book on the history and doctrine of the Declaration of Principles by David J. Engelsma, another volume of mediations in the *Reformed Spirituality* series by Herman Hoeksema, the next volume (for grades two and three) of the *Behold the Beauty* art curriculum by Connie Meyer, and a book by Marvin Kamps on Hendrik de Kock's reformation of the church in the Netherlands in 1834. Several books are in the process of being reprinted. The bestselling title *Doctrine according to Godliness* by Ronald Hanko will be reprinted this fall with a new cover and interior design, and *Voice of Our Fathers* by Homer C. Hoeksema is also on track for a revised reprint.

Several projects will be published in eBook format exclusively. A collection of radio sermons on the church by Herman Hoeksema from 1945, the *Church Order Commentary* by Monsma and van Dellen, and Abraham Kuyper's book of meditations entitled *To Be Near unto God* are all approved to be published as eBooks in the near future.

It is our prayer that you, our readers and constituents, will continue to read, study, and grow in the truth and that our publications will be a blessing to that end for you and your family. Please continue to pray for and support the RFPA in our work. Pray that God will raise up willing and able authors to undertake the important work of writing for the sake of the church. ♦

AUTOMATIC DEBIT AND ONLINE BILL PAY

Save time, worry, and stamps with these two bill pay methods

Automatic debit is especially convenient for Book Club members and *Standard Bearer* subscribers. Never again make a late book payment or forget to renew your subscription! Simply call the RFPA at 616.457.5970 to set up automatic debit for your account.

Online bill pay is a quick and secure payment method. Simply visit www.rfpa.org, select "Pay Your Bill," and follow the prompts to pay by credit, debit, or PayPal.

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Invoice #

REMEMBERING THE SCHISM OF 1953

Next year, the year 2013, represents for the Protestant Reformed Churches in America (PRCA) a significant anniversary. This anniversary marks the 60th year since the schism of 1953, an event that caused upheaval and reformation within the PRCA. The RFPa itself and our literature stand firm as witnesses to this difficult, blessed reformation, proclaiming the truth of God's sovereign particular grace in regard to God's covenant with believers and their children. This, the very foundation of the Reformed faith, was the main issue of the controversy.

Two of the warriors of the controversy were Rev. Herman Hoeksema (defending an unconditional covenant, the view upheld and taught within the PRCA and promoted by the RFPa) and Rev. Hubert de Wolf (defending a conditional



Heritage Recordings are available at rfpa.org

covenant). Each of these men promoted and defended their view in various sermons and lectures. The sermons and lectures given by these two men at the time of the schism have been preserved and are part of the Heritage Recordings audio collection given to the RFPa by Mr. Earl Kamps. They are now available to you at www.rfpa.org in the form of free audio downloads. Also available is a PDF timeline of important events and dates pertinent to the schism of 1953.

Please take the time to visit our site and listen to these valuable pieces of the history of the RFPa and the PRCA! ♦

YOU'RE INVITED

to hear a great follow-up from Hudsonville PRC's winter conference on postmodernism—and in connection with Prof. David J. Engelsma's two recent books on church membership (*Bound to Join* and *A Defense of the Church Institute*)—at the RFPa Annual Meeting.

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP IN A POSTMODERN ERA

Presented by Prof. Barry Gritters

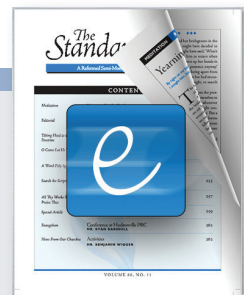
September 27, 2012 at 7:30 p.m.

Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church

This topic is timely and worthwhile in an age when many Christians are taking a blasé approach to church membership and worship as a whole. The ideas of “to each their own” and “doing what’s right in their own eyes” have taken a toll.

Following the speech, stay and learn about the work of the RFPa. The annual meeting presents the only opportunity each year for men to join the association. New members are always an encouragement to the RFPa, the editors and the authors of our publications. All are welcome and encouraged to attend!

5101 Beechtree Ave, Hudsonville, MI 49426



eSUBSCRIPTIONS NOW AVAILABLE!

Do you love digital media? Do you have a long commute or do you travel frequently for work? Does your *Standard Bearer* issue always seem to arrive after the publication date? Then the eSubscription to the *Standard Bearer* is perfect for you!

Read the latest issue easily from your mobile device or computer in eBook, PDF, or FlippingBook format (a neat digital magazine where you can turn the pages of the issue yourself).

Subscribe now at www.rfpa.org for a year subscription for just \$21.00/year or, if you're a current hardcopy subscriber, just \$10.50/year!

IN REVIEW:

A DEFENSE OF THE CHURCH INSTITUTE: RESPONSE TO THE CRITICS OF BOUND TO JOIN

A Review of *A Defense of the Church Institute: Response to the Critics of Bound to Join* by David J. Engelsma
Reformed Free Publishing Association, Jenison, MI, 2012
Hardcover, 139 pages

Reviewed by Rev. Martyn McGeown

Bound to Join, a book that urgently, and properly, urges all believers to join true, instituted churches of Jesus Christ—churches with the three marks and with lawfully called officebearers—was bitter medicine to some, who vehemently and angrily criticized Engelsma as an extremist, a denier of salvation by grace alone, unloving and lacking in pastoral care, a twister of Calvin and the creeds, and a crypto-Romanist.

Engelsma's response is to increase the dose in this new book!

In so doing, he answers his named and unnamed critics—"those at ease outside of Zion," Kevin Reed (who, irony of ironies, is the publisher of Calvin's *Come Out From Among Them: 'Anti-Nicodemite' Writings*), and the "Red Beetle" (an internet "Calvinist"). He also interacts with two overall positive reviews of *Bound to Join*, with a final chapter devoted to Harold Camping, the anti-ecclesiastical false prophet and charlatan of Family Radio.

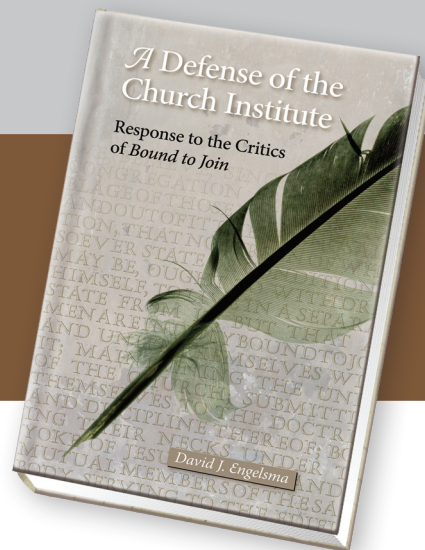
This new book proves without a shadow of a doubt that the historic, Reformed position is that believers must be members of a true, instituted church with their children *because this is exactly what the Reformed creeds and the reformers (especially Calvin) taught*. It is *not* the Reformed (and biblical) position that believers may remain aloof, neglecting, despising and scorning the church institute while piously praising the universal, invisible body and bride of Christ.

One might insist angrily that the Reformed confessions are wrong—and thus relinquish the right to the title Reformed—but one cannot deny that this is what they teach. The evidence Engelsma marshals is impressive, but it is really basic ecclesiology, about

which sadly many Christians are woefully ignorant. Some of the most important arguments are these. First, the invisible body of the elect always takes visible form in history as the "institute" (6); second, to the church institute *alone* Christ gives the means of grace and the keys of the kingdom, and therefore Christ gives salvation to believers and their children in the church (56); third, *only* in the church institute can believers keep the fourth commandment by worshiping God according to his word (57); and fourth, it is clear that when the Belgic Confession, other Reformed creeds, and Calvin himself say that outside of the church there is no salvation, they mean the *church institute*, because one cannot join, live separately from, or refuse to submit to the authority of the invisible universal church of the elect (55).

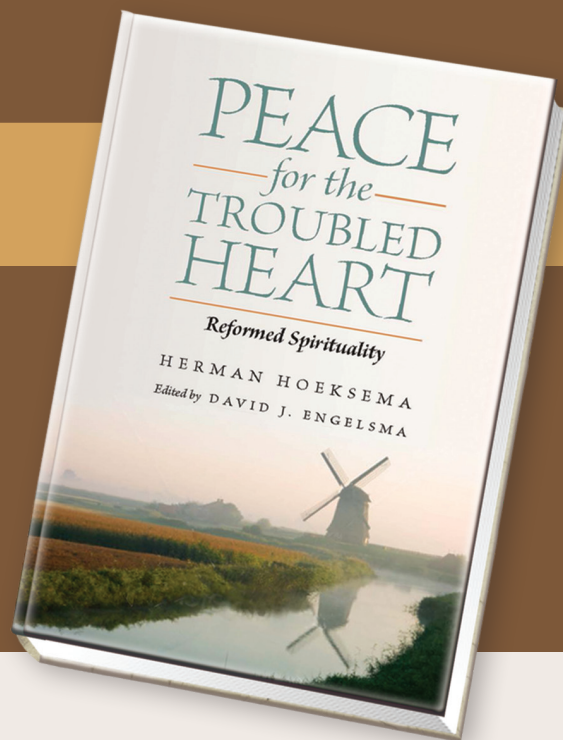
This is a strident defense of an already strident defense of membership in the church institute. If anything, Engelsma's statements are even stronger and his quotes from Calvin and other Reformed sources are even sharper. This book will most likely offend many, but the offense is not Engelsma. The offense is Christianity, as summarized in the Reformed confessions. The offense is Christ himself, who saves through the church institute and whose Spirit binds Himself to the means of grace used by the church institute.

Those who neglect or despise church membership lack so much. How this must spur us on to seek the true church, wherever she may be found, and, if we are already in the true church, to live as lively and thankful members. For it is a privilege to be, and always to remain, a member of the church of Christ! ♦



BOOK SPECIAL

PEACE FOR THE TROUBLED HEART



\$14.99 (regular retail \$28.95)

Valid through October 31, 2012*

Peace for the Troubled Heart is a genuinely Reformed devotional, breathing the rich experience of the believing child of God. Comprised of 37 meditations written by Herman Hoeksema, this book addresses the theme of struggle and suffering in this life of every believer as a pilgrim of this world. Hoeksema, in his warm, personal, often poetic style, masterfully exercises the spiritual gift of devotional writing.

*Book Club or any other discount does not apply. Book club members will not be charged shipping.

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Call 616.457.5970, email paula@rfpa.org, visit www.rfpa.org, or fill out the form below and mail it with a check or your credit card information to:

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**I would like to purchase _____
copies of *Peace for the Troubled Heart*
for \$14.99 each (\$28.95 retail value each).**

The RFPA Book Club discount does not apply. Book Club members will not be charged shipping costs. Nonclub members will be charged \$4.00 for shipping. Michigan residents add 6% sales tax.

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RFPA update

FROM OUR READERS...

"I just received Engelsma's *Federal Vision*. I have just finished listening to his audio lecture on the topic, so I am excited to begin the book!"

a reader from Tennessee

"Thank you for your continued efforts to make such books and resources available. I look forward to reading the latest. The issues they deal with are very pertinent. Keep the good books coming!"

a reader from Indiana

"I love the digital content that you have made available, especially the eBooks and eSubscriptions. Keep up the good work!"

a reader from Michigan

"I have been blessed in reading much of the *Standard Bearer* in the past and thank you for it. May our Lord richly bless this publication in the coming years!"

a reader from California

"I just want to let you know how thankful and grateful I am for the great work you guys are doing. The books are very edifying and a blessing in my life."

a reader from California

"Thank you for the wonderful sermons of Herman Hoeksema. They have been a great blessing to my family and friends. It's incredible to be listening to his sermons with my family in the comfort of our very own home."

anonymous

"Keep up the great work and the great books! Your website and communications look ever so professional and interesting as well."

a reader from California

The **RFPA UPDATE**

is a semiannual newsletter published by the Reformed Free Publishing Association (a non-profit organization registered in the State of Michigan)

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First published in September 1998