

## **A Critique Of Steve Schlissel’s “All I Really Need To Know About Worship — I Don’t Learn From The Regulative Principle”**

**by Rev. G. I. Williamson**

In this Lecture I want to deal with one of the latest attacks on the Regulative Principle of Worship from within the reformed community of North America. It comes from a well-known pastor in Brooklyn, New York, the Rev. Steve Schlissel. He was, at one time, a minister of the Christian Reformed Church and — at that time — was an outspoken opponent of liberal trends of the majority in that denomination. I well remember one of his eloquent speeches at the 1992 Synod meeting at Dordt College, in Sioux Center, Iowa. And it seemed to me that he was protesting — in effect, and more than anything else — against the rapid decline of integrity in the matter of confessional subscription.

As you are probably aware, all office-bearers of the Christian Reformed Church had solemnly affirmed these words:

We heartily believe and are persuaded that all the articles and points of doctrine contained in the Confession and Catechism of the Reformed Churches — together with the explanation of some points of the aforesaid doctrine made by the National Synod of Dordrecht, 1618-19 — do fully agree with the Word of God.

We promise therefore diligently to teach and faithfully to defend the aforesaid doctrine, without either directly or indirectly contradicting the same by our public preaching or writing.

We declare, moreover, that we not only reject all errors that militate against this doctrine and particularly those which were condemned by the above mentioned Synod, but that we are disposed to refute and contradict these and to exert ourselves in keeping the Church free from such errors. And if hereafter any difficulties or different sentiments respecting the aforesaid doctrines should arise in our minds, we promise that we will neither publicly nor privately propose, teach, or defend the same, either by preaching or writing, until we have first revealed such sentiments to the Consistory, Classis, or Synod, that the same may there be examined, being ready always cheerfully to submit to the judgment of the Consistory, Classis, or Synod, under the penalty, in case of refusal, of being by that very fact suspended from our office.

Psalm 15 asks this question: “Lord who may abide in Your tabernacle? Who may dwell in Your holy hill?” And the answer, in part, is this: “He who swears to his own hurt and changes not.” I take this to mean that solemn vows are binding. We should never make a solemn vow in the first place unless, and until, we are firmly persuaded that what we are affirming is Scriptural. But if we have once taken a vow that is in accord with the Bible, we are not at liberty to lay that vow aside later on if we find that it is costly to keep it. Yet it seems to me that this is exactly what Rev. Schlissel has done.

When I first read the series of articles in his publication called *Messiah’s Mandate* — in which he repudiates the historic Reformed doctrine of the regulative principle — I wrote to him to plead with him to cease this public attack on the regulative principle, and instead to bring his concerns forward in a proper ecclesiastical manner. As you may know, he regularly appeals for support from the members of various Presbyterian and Reformed Churches all over North

America. But here he is, now, going over the heads of all the pastors and elders of these churches to tell their people that their Reformed Confessions are wrong in what they teach. And that, I said, is an unethical thing to do, and that he ought to stop it. His reply was that since he had submitted his teaching to the elders of his church — and since they agreed with him — he was not obligated to submit the matter to a wider ecclesiastical assembly for evaluation. I'll leave it to you to judge whether or not that is being faithful to the form of subscription.

And here let me say that it is not my intention at all to treat the Reformed Confessions as if they are infallible statements. Our reforming fathers never wanted us to treat the documents they formulated as in any way equal to Scripture. That is why — right from the start — they provided a proper way to bring about changes in these Confessions. And that 'proper way' is by bringing the matter, in an orderly way, before the local, regional and national assemblies for proper examination. I would have no problem at all if Rev. Schlissel did this in the way he agreed to when he signed that form of subscription. This was actually done, some years ago, in the Reformed Churches of New Zealand during my time of service there. And it was productive of good precisely because it was done in the manner required by the form of subscription. But to go over the heads of all the office bearers in the churches that Rev. Schlissel circularizes for contributions to undermine the confidence of the people in those churches in what he himself admits is the historic Reformed doctrine, is — to put it mildly — inexcusable. And it is a great pity that even some of the better Reformed Churches are letting him get away with it.

But now let us turn to a summary of Steve Schlissel's articles entitled "All I Really Need to Know About Worship — I Don't Learn from the Regulative Principle".

1. To begin with, then, he rightly finds the origin of the Regulative Principle of Worship (hereafter RPW) — as we have come to know it — at the time of the Reformation.

At the time of the Reformation, the nausea induced in the godly upon their awakening to the sinful Romish excesses and superstitions in worship gave rise to a radical, but not fully thought out, solution, the Regulative Principle of Worship: If it is not commanded in Scripture to be performed in worship, it is forbidden in worship. It is sometimes said in other words: Only that which God has commanded is permitted.

In response to these words of Rev. Schlissel, I want to say that I've been reading the writings of John Calvin diligently for nearly half a century. And I can assure you that Calvin 'fully thought out' the RPW. I would even go so far as to say that I know of nothing else in all of Calvin's voluminous writings as thoroughly thought out as this was.

2. Rev. Schlissel is also right in what he writes about the profound benefits that came from this RPW. Listen:

This pendulum swing by the Reformers was certainly a breath of fresh air! Virtually overnight it cleansed the toxins out of Reformed worship like two months of cold turkey cleanses the "horse" out of a junkie's veins. Way to go! Out went the relics, the Mariology, the adoration of saints, the indulgences, the novenas and the like; in came clear, accessible, God-glorifying, soul-saving, sheep-edifying, Word-centered worship.

Nowhere, in Rev. Schlissel's writings, have I found any denial that the RPW was indeed taught by such men as John Calvin and John Knox, or that it is clearly taught in the great Reformed Confessions.

3. Yet in spite of this admission he does not hesitate to say that this principle (the RPW) — that whatever is not commanded by God is therefore forbidden in worship — is not taught in the Bible. Here, again, I quote Rev. Schlissel:

I will offer several reasons for Reformed people to reject the proposition that the Scripture teaches the Regulative Principle of Worship. But please carefully note these qualifications:

1) I'm not arguing against the sort of worship found in RPW churches. For my money, it is vastly superior to most other extant worship models (of which I'm aware). The RPW is a mistake, but if you have to make a mistake this is a very fine one.

2) By arguing against the regulative principle of worship per se, I'm sorry to say that I demur from the position of many of my colleagues. Most of my compatriots tend to embrace the principle, choosing only to argue whether it is too rigorously or loosely applied in this or that circumstance. No, my argument is not with the application of the principle: it is that the RPW itself is not Biblical. (Pt. 1, p. 3)

Consequently, we find our irony: The regulative principle of worship, said to guard the people of God from the inventions of men, is itself an invention of men and therefore an imposition upon the consciences of those forced to accept it. (p. 7)

Here, again, I am constrained to point out that this is a serious misrepresentation! I do not know, and I have not even heard, of anyone who has ever been 'forced' to accept the RPW. Rev. Schlissel himself once subscribed to at least two Reformed Confessions, which clearly teach the RPW, but no one forced him to do it.

In the Orthodox Presbyterian Church we do not require communicant members to subscribe to the Confessional Standards as ministers, elders and deacons do. They are required to signify their unqualified submission to the Bible, and to the teaching authority of the Church in subordination to the Bible. All office bearers, on the other hand, are required to subscribe to the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Catechisms, Larger and Shorter, before they are allowed to hold office in the church. And that is not all: office bearers are also required to refrain from doing what Rev. Schlissel has been doing. They are not permitted to publicly preach or teach, whether orally or in writing, that which is contrary to the Confessions they have sworn to uphold. If they become convinced, later on, that there is error in these documents, there is a proper and orderly way to bring about changes. This has already been done, in a few instances, and our Confessions have been amended accordingly. But the point I make is that no one is ever forced to subscribe these confessional statements.

4. Rev. Schlissel then goes on, in his series of articles, to try to disprove the regulative principle.

In a rather extended section entitled 'Regulativists Find It Where It Isn't' he does, in my opinion, point out some weaknesses in the way that some have handled certain traditional texts that support this doctrine. At the same time it is certainly not true that all defenders of the historic doctrine are vulnerable to his criticism. And it is particularly noteworthy that even after attempting to present arguments against the regulative principle, Rev. Schlissel is constrained to admit that the Bible does teach it after all! In the section which follows which is entitled 'Regulativists Miss It Where It Is,' Rev. Schlissel has this to say:

The locus classicus, the most frequent and important textual citation for the RPW is Deuteronomy 12:32. 'What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it.' But here again the regulativists either ignore or overlook the setting. By isolating this particular verse from its context, its beauty is marred, its force is neutralized, and its power compromised.

Deuteronomy 12:32 appears in an epoch-marking context: (he continues) we have here a major step in the progress of the religion of the covenant. Before this, covenant keepers could offer sacrifice wherever they felt like it. Henceforth sacrifice would be severely restricted. It would be restricted, as we said up front, in regard to place, in regard to people, and in regard to particulars.

It is here, then, in Deuteronomy 12 that we do indeed find introduced what might properly be called the Regulative Principle of Worship: If it's commanded, you'd better do it; if it's not commanded, it is forbidden (see v. 32). Don't look to the pagans, either. They do thoroughly whacked-out things that I abominate (vv. 28-31). You just do what I say and only what I say.

The point, however, is that what is strictly regulated is the sacrificial system of worship, not worship per se. In fact 'mere' sacred assemblies are not covered by this rule.

By now you will see that — according to Rev. Schlissel — there were two kinds of worship in Old Testament times. (a) There was sacrificial worship, which was found only in the Tabernacle or Temple. And then (b) there was non-sacrificial worship, which was found in the Synagogue. He refers to these as "mere" sacred assemblies. "The Temple worship was strictly regulated" he says, "because the Temple worship was the Gospel of the Messiah." But Synagogue worship, on the other hand, was not strictly regulated because it was not the gospel of the Messiah.

5. His argument is then carried one step further when he says that there is a parallel to this under the New Testament: (1) there is worship in the heavenly realm which is the continuation of Tabernacle/Temple worship. (2) The worship of the church, on the other hand, is just a continuation of Synagogue worship. And so, being 'mere' worship (to use his term), it is not subject to the RPW. The strict RPW that applied to the Tabernacle and Temple pertains to only one thing now, says Schlissel, and that is the gospel message. In other words, God is no more jealous today for the way in which worship is conducted in his church than he was for the way in which it was conducted in the synagogue. What he is jealous for is what most of us would call 'purity of doctrine.'

Rev. Schlissel likens his novel theory to a famous New York bridge — The Verrazano Bridge (which he calls 'the most beautiful in the world') — which has an upper and lower level. The upper level, according to Schlissel's novel scheme, represents the worship of the heavenly sanctuary — or Temple — where the Lord Jesus is. The lower level, on the other hand, represents the worship of the earthly Christian synagogue where we find ourselves. And because Synagogue worship is not Temple worship, according to Rev. Schlissel, the RPW doesn't apply. And, again, we quote him:

The New Testament is beyond clear in teaching that the organizational model for the worshipping communities called 'churches' was the synagogue, not the Temple. (Pt. 1, p. 7)

And "for us the synagogue presents no problem at all. We find that it is sacrificial worship only, from Deuteronomy 12 on, that is absolutely restricted in regard to place, performers and

particulars.” “Such restrictions” says Rev. Schlissel, “never governed common sacred assemblies.”

6. Now in spite of the fact that I profoundly disagree with both the doctrinal theory and the ethical behavior of Rev. Schlissel, I want to give him his due, because he does have a measure of respect for those who not only profess adherence to the RPW but also try to respect it in practice! And, again, I quote:

The RPW has a historic, discernible, commonly received meaning. It is passing strange that some who (quite properly) are at odds with deconstructionist methodology would then attempt to pass themselves off as regulativists when they have first divested the word of its historical meaning and injected it with an entirely opposite meaning. We would not take kindly to a man who tries to convince us that a cow is an animal with two legs, feathers and gills. He’s describing something other than what we call a cow, no doubt about it. So also, true regulativists are those who at least attempt to apply a discreet [sic discrete?] principle — if it is not commanded, it is forbidden — even if their attempts include improvements. The key is that they own it in a way which leaves the principle recognizable as the one historically received. (Part 2, p. 5)

“It is not my intention, I remind you” he says, “to overthrow or even to challenge the legitimacy of worship as it is found in churches which adhere to the RPW. After all, that is the very sort of worship one finds in our church, Messiah’s Congregation. It is precisely because I believe that regulativist-style worship is the most God-glorifying and sheep-edifying worship that I want to see it more widely accepted, adopted and perhaps improved. But if it is to be argued for, it must be argued for on the grounds that it is demonstrably the best sort of worship, not on the grounds that all other worship is, by definition, an abomination.” (Part 2, p. 6)

It is better to confess up-front that the regulative principle, being unscriptural, ought to be rejected. We respect the earnest adherents of the RPW, and we treasure the sort of worship God has providentially allowed to flourish in their courts. We would adopt and maintain that worship — indeed, we’d even propagate it — we’d just do so on other premises. (Part 2, p. 5).

7. There is certainly an element in all this with which I can agree. It is better to have honest denial than to have counterfeit adherence. My problem with Steve Schlissel is not that he lacks “GOOD INTENTIONS.” (This, by the way, is the title of the closing section of Part 2 of his attack on the Regulative Principle of Worship). No, my problem is not with his intentions, but it is rather with his method. The historic form of subscription was purposely designed to guard the people of God from the kind of sudden assault on the doctrines of the Reformed Churches that has now been launched by Rev. Schlissel.

8. But, now, let me respond to the entire line of argument presented in these papers.

A. And the first thing I want to say is that Rev. Schlissel’s whole split-level concept of worship is without merit.

1. It is without merit because the New Testament says the Christian Church *is* the Temple — God’s final temple. It is the Temple prophesied in such great detail in the last section of the book of Ezekiel.

It is true, of course, that there is an aspect of this Temple which is heavenly. That is true because part of the church is in heaven, where Jesus sits at the right hand of God. Yet Paul does

not hesitate to say — to New Testament believers such as ourselves, while we're right here on earth — “You [YE in the KJV] are the Temple of God” (1 Cor. 3:16,17; 2 Cor. 6:16; cf. Eph. 2:21).

It is also a fact that we ourselves, as Christian believers, are described in the New Testament as those who participate right now in that heavenly temple worship. The Apostle boldly states that our Lord has already “seated us with Him in the heavenly places” (Eph. 2:6) and the author of the book of Hebrews says that we “have come to Mount Zion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of righteous men made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant” (Heb. 12:22-24). Therefore I am unable to understand how Rev. Schlissel can describe the worship of a true church as mere ‘lower level’ worship. It would certainly be proper to describe some of the man-made worship in false churches as lower level worship. It is certainly not on the upper level spoken of in Hebrews. But that is just the problem: for any worship to be acceptable to God it must be ‘upper level’ worship.

2. I believe it was for this reason that the Apostle said: “the woman ought to have authority on her head, because of the angels” (1 Cor. 11:10). Whatever else that statement may mean, it surely means this: when we gather to worship, here on earth, we're in the presence of the angels. And, we are in the presence of angels because we are part of the final temple.

It is because the church is the final temple that the Apostle Paul speaks of himself (no doubt in unity with the other Apostles) as the wise architect who laid the foundation (1 Cor. 3:10). And then immediately goes on to speak of the building of the church with terms borrowed from the Old Testament temple: “Now if any man builds upon the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones — wood, hay, straw — each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it, because it is to be revealed by fire; and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work” (1 Cor. 3:12,13).

So the Apostle saw himself in much the same light as Moses and David. As they were the human instruments through whom God revealed the blueprint, so to speak, of the Tabernacle and Temple of the Old Testament era, so Paul was the human instrument through whom God revealed the blueprint of the final temple. I ask you, then: was Paul only concerned about doctrine? Was he not also concerned about practice? Was he not concerned that everything in the worship of this final temple was according to God's commandment?

As John Calvin rightly observed in commenting on the Great Commission as recorded in Matthew 28:20:

Christ in sending the apostles, does not entirely resign his office, as if he ceased to be the Teacher of his Church; for he sends away the apostles with this reservation, that they shall not bring forward their own inventions, but shall purely and faithfully deliver from hand to hand (as we say) what he has entrusted to them.

And that it was not only doctrine that our Lord entrusted to them but also practice is plainly seen throughout the writings of the Apostles. [1] “For I received of the Lord that which I also delivered to you...” says Paul, to the Corinthians, or, in other words, it was of the utmost

importance to him that they should observe nothing more and nothing less than that which was instituted by Jesus.

[2] In 1 Timothy 2:12 he makes it clear that God does not suffer a woman to teach, or to exercise authority over a man.

[3] In 1 Timothy 3 he gives careful instruction concerning the qualifications for office. So it is not only doctrine that concerned the Apostle. No, it was also practice.

[4] In further commenting on the proper decorum of women in the church he tells the Corinthians that “we have no other practice, nor have the churches of God” (1 Cor. 11:16).

[5] And then, after giving a long list of directions as to what is, and what is not proper to be done in the church of God, he says “If anyone thinks he is a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the Lord’s commandment. But if anyone does not recognize this,” he adds, “he is not recognized” (1 Cor. 14:37, 38). Paul was not giving pious advice about what he thought might be good things to do in some lower level, Christian synagogue, worship. (Or, ‘mere’ worship’ as Schlissel would put it). No, he was giving God’s commandments because the worship in the authentic New Testament Church is Temple worship.

I cannot go into this at length here, but let me also add that I am not at all persuaded that the ancient synagogue worship was as loose and unregulated as Rev. Schlissel seems to think. After all, what was synagogue worship? It is my conviction that it was what I would call mental participation in Temple worship made necessary because of the distances. Josephus, the Jewish historian, says Moses ordained “that every week men should desert their other occupations and assemble to listen to the Law and to obtain a thorough and accurate knowledge of it” (Ag. Ap. 2:175). And Luke confirms this in his quotation of James, at the Jerusalem Synod. “For Moses has had throughout many generations those who preach him in every city, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath” (Acts 15:21). It was not possible, in Old Testament times, for all believers to always go to Jerusalem. So they gathered, locally, and they read the scriptures and expounded them. But they all knew that without the shedding of blood, in temple worship, there could be no remission. So, even then, their worship was really centered on the temple.

(3) So it is not true that in the Christian church — the final temple — it was only doctrine that was regulated strictly. (And by the way, even if it is put this way, one of those ‘doctrines’ is the doctrine of worship!) No, but as the Apostle constantly insisted, worship practice was also regulated strictly. And right there you have the historic regulative principle by good and necessary inference. No wonder our Reforming Fathers said: what is not commanded is therefore forbidden.

9. What then is our final conclusion?

Our conclusion is that — however well intended it may have been — Rev. Schlissel’s newly invented solution is really just another attempt to find a convenient and easy way to justify the present-day departure from adherence to the RPW.

He claims, of course, that he wants something very much like the worship found in churches that still adhere to the RPW. Listen to what he says:

It is not my intention, I remind you, to overthrow or even to challenge the legitimacy of worship as it is found in churches which adhere to the Regulative Principle of Worship. After all, that is the very sort of worship one finds in our church, Messiah's Congregation. (Part 2, p. 6)

It is precisely because I believe that regulativist-style worship is the most God-glorifying and sheep-edifying worship that I want to see it more widely accepted, adopted and perhaps improved. (Ibid.)

That constant refrain in Rev. Schlissel's writing is, of course, meant to be very reassuring. But one wonders, at first sight, how he could possibly regard Regulative Principle of Worship as legitimate if the Regulative Principle itself is a mere human invention! But, on second thought, it does make sense: for if there is no God-given RPW then it is simply a matter of preference. And if some happen to prefer this kind of worship then that too is legitimate. (It is still amazing, to me at least, that this 'bad tree' identified as such by Schlissel could, by his own admission, bear such wonderful fruit. How could something invented by men do so much good in edifying God's people?)

Rev. Schlissel even says:

I sympathize with the apprehension which grips some regulativists. They fear that if their principle is overturned, chaos will reign in worship, that 'anything will go.' (Ibid. p. 7).

Well, that statement is truly 'mind boggling.' And you have to wonder where Rev. Schlissel has been in the second half of this 20th century. What we have right now in the North American Protestant Church is, in my judgment, chaos. And what does he offer as a replacement? Well, he offers something that he seems to consider as new and original that no one has ever thought of before. He calls it "The Informed Principle of Worship," which, being interpreted, means: "If it's not forbidden it might be permitted" (those are Rev. Schlissel's own words).

Now I ask you: what is the 'cash value', so to speak, of that remarkable statement? Well, I think it is just this: what Rev. Schlissel says, in effect, is simply: 'Trust me. Trust me to work it out and then inform you as to what might be allowed in worship (even though God has not commanded it). Maybe we will need a new ceremony or two. Maybe we will need to invent a few more special sacred days, etc. But not to worry, I will inform you as soon as I've figured out what might be permitted.'

Well, my answer is: 'no thanks Steve.' And I say this for the following reasons.

1. The Bible alone is my authority. It is not the Bible and something else — not even Steve Schlissel. As a matter of fact one of my Reformed doctrines, the doctrine of the fall and the consequent sinfulness of human nature, warns me against putting my trust in any man.
2. The Bible is sufficient. It teaches everything that I am to believe concerning God, and the whole duty that God requires of me, especially in the sphere of worship.
3. The real need, therefore, is not for further attempts to justify the status quo, or that part of the status quo that appeals to someone like Rev. Schlissel!

4. No, the great need at the present time is for a new Reformation. And the bed-rock foundation of true reformation is a return to 'sola scriptura.' As the great Belgic Confession of Faith puts it: the true Church of God is the Church in which "all things are managed according to the pure Word of God, (and) all things contrary thereto rejected."

5. And so it is my conviction there will be no new Reformation unless and until —

a. There is a return to integrity in taking our vows. The Westminster Confession of Faith says:

22:4. An oath is to be taken in the plain and common sense of the words, without equivocation, or mental reservation. It cannot oblige to sin; but in anything not sinful, being taken, it binds to performance, although to a man's own hurt.

b. And a return to basic honesty concerning the teaching of our Confessions

President Clinton showed his lack of basic honesty when he raised the question of what the meaning of the word is, is! What is needed today, in Reformed Churches, is honesty about the meaning of such little words as "all", "only", and "any". Maybe then we can also be honest about the meaning of such big words as "instituted", "prescribed" and "commanded!"

c. Finally: as bad as Steve Schlissel's ethics are with respect to the vow he once took respecting the proper method of dealing with differences from the Confessions, I do appreciate his honesty. He is right when he says there are many today who say they agree with the regulative principle, but then they really demolish it by way of redefinition. The result is that they allow the very things our Fathers intended to exclude by this principle.

Again, let me say, I agree with Schlissel when he says:

It is passing strange that some who (quite properly) are at odds with deconstructionist methodology would then attempt to pass themselves off as regulativists when they have first divested the word of its historical meaning and injected it with an entirely opposite meaning.

I prefer Schlissel's open rejection to that.

d. But that doesn't take anything away from the serious damage that he has done by his irresponsible, and unaccountable, attack on the Reformed Confessions.

Editor's note. This lecture was originally presented as the third in a series on Biblical Principles In Worship, at the 1999 Worship Conference held by the Presbyterian Reformed Church of Edmonton AB. Text Copyright © 1999 by G. I. Williamson. Used by Permission. A few comments from the lecture, which were not in the prepared text, have been added by way of footnote. Rev. Williamson has been a Presbyterian pastor for 50 years and a staunch defender of what is called the Regulative Principle of Worship. He is the author of expositions of both the Westminster Confession and Shorter Catechism.

[Editor's Note. Rev. Schlissel's articles have been running both in special editions of his church's newsletter, *Messiah's Mandate*, and in more numerous parts in the *Chalcedon Report*. When citing Rev. Schlissel, Rev. Williamson is referring to the first two letters as published in *Messiah's Mandate*, which are the first four parts in the Chalcedon series. "All I Really Need to Know About Worship — I Don't Learn from the Regulative Principle" *Chalcedon Report*, Part 1 (March 1999), 2 (May 1999), 3 (June 1999), 4 (July 1999). The series is ongoing at this writing, there having been at least 5 or 6 *Messiah's Mandate* letters, appearing in the August, September, December 1999, January, February 2000, issues of the *Chalcedon Report*.

'All I Need to Know about Worship ... I don't Learn from the Regulative Principle (Part 1).' Another Special Edition of *Messiah's Mandate*. First Letter, 1999. (Brooklyn, NY: Messiah's Congregation, 1999). 5.

[Ed. This is Schlissel's term for those who hold to the Regulative Principle of Worship.]

[Ed. The original *Messiah's Mandate* uses 'discreet' – i.e. cautious, careful, prudent ('All I Really Need to Know About Worship,' Special Edition of *Messiah's Mandate*, Second Letter, 1999, p. 5). The version in the *Chalcedon Report* uses 'discrete' – i.e. distinct.

[Would you like a real nice house without a foundation? That's what he's really taking about. He wants to keep the house without the foundation.]

[I assert that Paul is claiming the very same thing that Moses claimed when he was the organ of the revelation of the plan of the Tabernacle, the very thing that David claimed when he said he had the whole plan from God for the Temple — I assert that Paul the apostle is the third temple architect in the history of God's kingdom. He was the wise architect, the very Greek word there, who has laid out the blueprint for the final temple of God.]

[I wonder what it's like in Brooklyn? If Steve Schlissel would visit some of the 'reformed' so called churches in northwest Iowa, he would find that there is already chaos. That's what there is – chaos! Have any of you ever read the periodical called *Reformed Worship* published by the Christian Reformed Church? That's chaos, folks! Read it! How would you like a big circular thing lowered down from the ceiling with all kinds of symbols on it? How would you like to come to church to find a pile of dirt with a wooden cross there and you don't have a sermon, you're supposed to look at that and meditate on it? That's happening, today, in some Reformed Churches. What are we doing? It's chaos already!]

[I regard Steve Schlissel as a brother in Christ, he's a friend — I hope he is. He said he was the last time we corresponded by email over this very thing. I love the man; I'm so thankful for the wonderful things he's done. But I don't think any individual is free to do what he is doing in this series of articles.]

[I am sorry to say I think some of the Westminster theologians are doing exactly that — engaging in demolition by way of redefinition. Professor John Frame at Westminster West says he can't find any proof in the Bible that you have to have preaching in the worship service. He says he cannot find anything in the Bible that prevents dancing in worship. I think the man just simply demolishes the regulative principle by redefinition. I prefer Schlissel to that.]

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