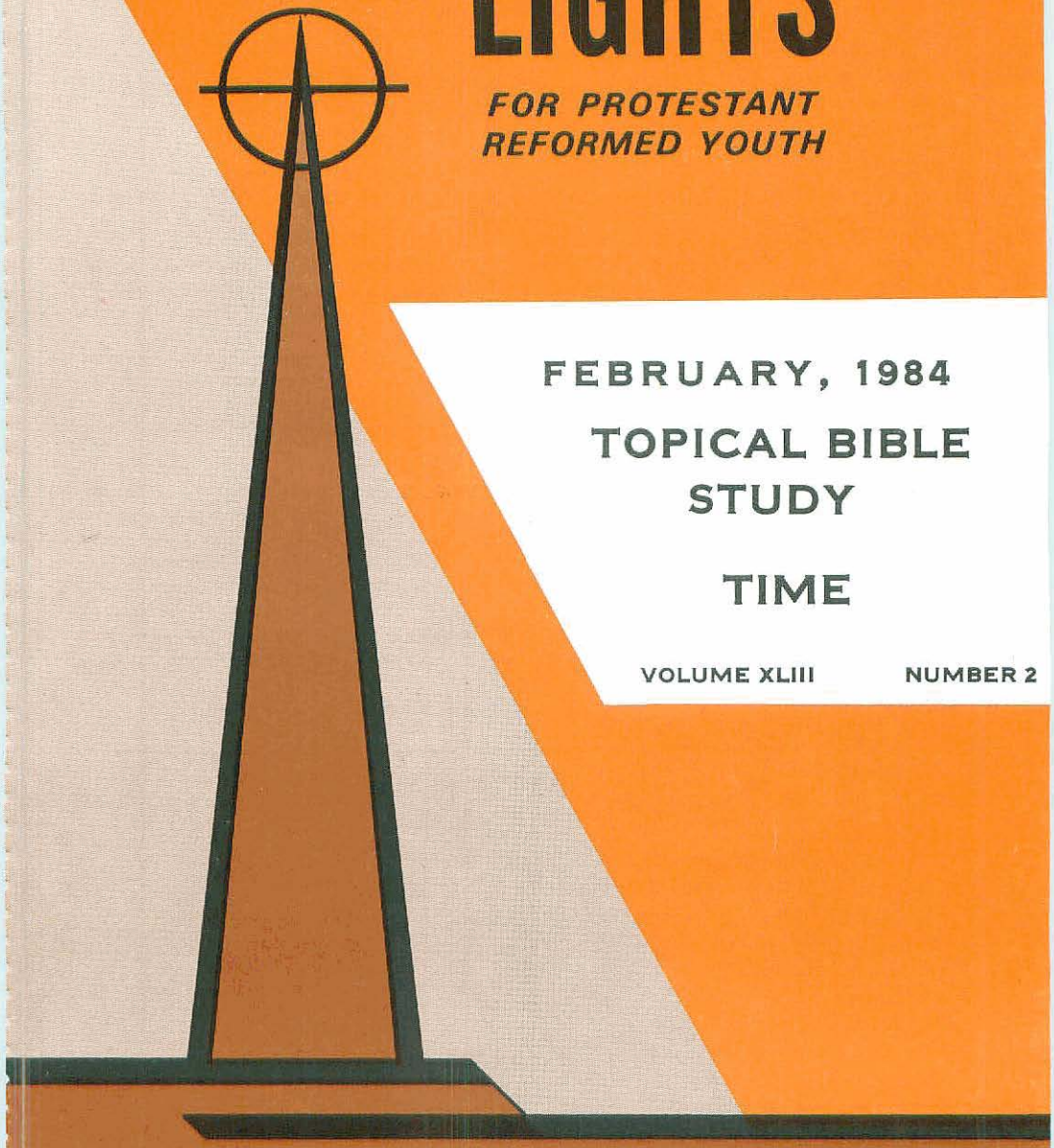
BEACON LIGHTS

FOR PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH



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TOPICAL BIBLE STUDY

TIME

VOLUME XLIII NUMBER 2

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Editorial

Why Did This Happen To Me?

by David Harbach

About a month ago, as I was letting two students off at a bus stop, I saw down the road away a young teenage boy step into the path of an oncoming car. No doubt, the boy was in a hurry and had intended to run across to the other side of the four lane road. He reached the second lane and froze in fear as a light blue car, with a slight swerving motion, slammed into his left side. The force of the impact threw him, like a rag doll, twenty or more feet into the air before he struck the damp cold pavement, landing on his right side.

Later, while I talked to the police officer at the scene of the accident, I could see the driver of the car was troubled. While sitting in the police cruiser, he looked as though the accident was recurring again in his mind. Once, he even buried his face in his hands. Worried and concerned, he thanked me for providing information about his unfortunate circumstances, while in the background he could hear the cries of the injured boy.

Almost two years ago and a hundred yards south on the same road, another boy was struck by an automobile. Today, that boy is paralyzed from the neck down and information about his recovery has appeared in the Grand Rapids Press a couple of times.

The driver of the car might be tempted to ask the questions, "Why me?" "Why did this have to happen to me?" Maybe he would also say, "If only I was just a few minutes earlier or later, then this would not have happened to me!" Then too, if we were the driver, we might see the horrible scene over and over again in our mind. The responsibility in having caused a young person to suffer a severe injury would weigh heavily on our mind and heart. We would feel remorse. We would wish that it would all be over and done with.

When the boy starts to recover from his injuries, he will probably ask similar questions. "Why did this happen to me?" "Why me?!" "If only I had jumped out of the way, then I wouldn't be here in the hospital with all these sick people.!"

Now this action of asking questions is something we tend to do automatically when we are young people. We have matured into young people physically, mentally, and spiritually. We now have the mental capacity to ask more thought provoking questions about life. We ask our parents and friends many questions about life, because God has put the desire in our hearts to know the truth about life. We aren't just curious about life, such as any unbeliever might be, but we want to know **the truth** as only a child of God can hear it and believe it. As young people, we ask questions so that we gain the knowledge of the truth we desire with all our heart to know and believe.

However, there is a pertinent aspect of asking questions that we ought to consider. Asking questions is alright, but

the questions we ask must come from a heart and mind that has carefully considered the possible questions to ask and then asks only those questions that are out of a desire to know the truth. This aspect of asking questions is important to our whole life, for if we ask foolish questions out of curiosity, then we stand on dangerous ground, but if we ask questions that are out of a desire to know the truth about life, then we stand on a ground firmly rooted in the love of God.

You can understand that the questions asked at the beginning of this article were questions asked from a sinful heart. They were foolish because they doubted God's purpose in our life. For it was God's will that the accident happened to those two people. To ask, "Why me?" is really asking, "By what right did God do this to me?" That is blasphemy because the question seeks to mock God's will for my life, as if I had the right to question the actions of God as regards my life. The statments that begin with, "If only I. . ." are also foolish because God willed everything to happen the way it happened and that can never be changed. The apostle Paul answers this kind of foolish questioning in Romans 9:19-21 where we read, "Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will? Nay but, O man, who are thou that repliest against God? Should the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour; and another unto dishonour?" The principle in these verses is the same for questions such as "Why me?" Who art thou to reply against God and to question His will for your life?

This does not mean that we can't ask any questions, for we can, but they must be the right questions asked out of a desire to bring glory to the name of God. We do this when we sing Psalter number 116, stanza 3, "Why restless, why cast down my soul? Trust God, who will employ His aid for thee, and change these sighs to thankful hymns of joy," or Psalter 114, stanza 10, "O why art thou cast down, my soul, and why so troubled shouldest thou be? Hope thou in God, and Him extol, Who gives His saving help to me."

The apostle Paul asked the question of Jesus Christ, "What wilt thou have me to do Lord?" The Ethiopian eunuch asked Philip, "See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" Judas, not Iscariot, asked Jesus, "Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?" All of these questions were asked out of a sincerity to know the truth, in order that the people who asked them might obey God.

Those are only a few of the examples that are provided for us to show us how to ask proper questions and the motive for asking questions about life. Then let us follow the examples of those who have gone before us for that is the will of God for our life.

1984 SINGSPIRATION SCHEDULE

February 19 — First
April 22 — Faith
May 20 — Hope
September 16 — Southwest
November 18 — Faith
December 16 — Hudsonville

AS A FATHER PITIETH

by Rev. D. Engelsma

Love

Taking God's Fatherhood as the pattern, we will love our children. This is the heart of Reformed child-rearing—not authority, not discipline, but the love of our children. In love, we bring them forth and receive them from God; in love, we live with them; in love, we teach them; in love, we discipline them.

For this is the essence of Fatherhood in God. In love, God the Father eternally begets the Divine Son and lives with Him the blessed life of the Godhead, in the Spirit. The Son is in the bosom of the Father (John 1:18). The Father says of Him, "My beloved Son" (Matthew 3:17). In love, God chose, adopted, regenerated, cares for, and disciplines His people, even as it was love that chose Israel and made Israel God's son. When Moses accounts for Israel's being a special people unto the Lord, the ultimate cause is: "because Jehovah loved you" (Deuteronomy 7:8). In Romans 8, the comfort of the New Testament children of God is that the beginning, the end, and the in-between of the ways of God towards them is love: we are persuaded, that nothing "shall be able to separate us from the love of God. . ." (v. 39).

Loving our children consists of regarding them, yearning towards them, and setting our affections upon them as delightful and precious; of resolving to do them good, and not evil; of carrying out his resolve in words and deeds of blessing; and of extablishing a uniquely close bond of friendship with them.

Our love for them is by no means merely a natural feeling. It is much more than this; it is a spiritual grace, sought and received of the Holy Spirit. As regards our natural feelings, we may be, and often are, tempted not to love our children. We resent them when they come. We feel quite hateful at times, especially when they are bad or demanding. There may even be a strong inclination to dislike one of our children. These things grieve the believer deeply. "What is the matter with me?," he asks himself. "Do I lack the basic requirement of a Christian father, or mother?" It is important, then, to remember that love for our children is not merely a natural feeling, which we either have or do not have, but a spiritual grace to be asked of God in the Name of Jesus, Who will give us all that we request in that worthy Name.

Significantly, in Titus 2:4, Paul instructs Pastor Titus to have the older women **teach** the young women to love their children. The love of mothers for their children in the Church is not merely the admittedly powerful feeling that is natural to women, but a far more powerful grace that they receive through the teaching of the Word of God. Related to this is that we delight in our children, not merely as our own flesh and image, but as covenant children—God's children, children of the Church. This guards against an

essentially selfish upbringing of our children, which can go wrong in many ways, all ruinous. It also grounds our love, empowering our love for the long, difficult haul.

We are to love our children in such a way that we show them our love, tell them our love for them, and surround them with the unmistakable proof of it. It is exceeding strange that there should be any hesitancy here, in view of the fact that the gospel is nothing other than the message and assurance to us from God Himself that He loves us. God makes us to know His love for us; He tells us, again and again, "I love you"; He has given us the proof of it in the cross of Jesus. Strange thought it may seem, there is a hesitancy of some parents to express their love to their children, whether because they think that this compromises their authority or because of the still more serious weakness, that they fear to commit themselves, and expose themselves, in the (always dangerous) relationship of love, even with their own children.

Once, after he had preached on the address of the Lord's Prayer, "Our Fatner Who art in heaven," stressing God's love for us, so that, as the Heidelberg Catechism assures believers, He will not "deny us what we ask of Him in true faith" (Q. 120), the pastor was approached by an older woman of the congregation, herself a mother of children. In tears, she told him that she had never thought of the Fatherhood of God as love, but only as awesome majesty. It came out that her own father had never told her that he loved her, had never held her on his lap and thrown his arms around her, had never showed himself to her to be anything other than a severe, frightening authority. Naturally enough, her conception of the Heavenly Father was similar: an awful Sovereign, hardly to be trusted, certainly not to be embraced, but rather to be feared with a kind of terror.

On another occasion, at a pastoral visit, an old father in the church expressed with obvious sincerity, how much he loved his children. Knowing something of the family-relationship, the pastor asked, "Have you told them of your love?" The old man admitted that he had not done this. Told that he should do this, because God does this to His children, he readily agreed, with happy results.

These, I fear, are not rare exceptions.

Of one thing, our children must never be in any doubt; of one thing, they must be sure, absolutely sure—our love for them. This is a crucial factor in the child's spiritual and psychological development. Assurance of the parents' love for them as covenant children of God gives a sturdy security; a healthy self-love and sense of worth, in Christ; and a right knowledge of the Father in heaven. Imagine that God would withhold from us grown-ups the assurance of His love. Imagine that He would leave the impression with us that He really hated us on account of our sinfulness. How miserable, how anxious, we would be! How destructive this would be for our whole life!

This is no small part of the wickedness of the man, or woman, who divorces his wife, or her husband, and forsakes the children. It is an act of hatred and rejection, not only of the mate, but also of the children—hatred and rejection that they keenly feel and that will destroy them, unless God graciously prevents it.

It is especially necessary that we assure, and reassure, our children of our love, when we discipline them. It is when He disciplines His children that God must assure us of His love, as Hebrews 12 makes plain. We are tempted to respond to discipline, even though rightly administered, with weariness and fainting (v.3), with hands which hang down and feeble knees (v. 12). In the midst of our disciplining, God must say to us, "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth" (v. 6). The holy anger and pain do not

indicate any break in the Divine love. If we need this assurance, why should we suppose that it is any different with our children?

The **father** must show love to the children, as well as the mother. There is a notion that mothers show love and sympathy, but that fathers are all sternness and authority. This notion is not derived from Scriptures. Psalm 103 ascribes pity for his children to the father: "as a father pitieth his children" (v. 13). Pity is love; but it is love in the form of tender compassion for the weak and suffering. If our idea of fatherhood does not include such tenderness, it is high time to change our idea of fatherhood. As Father, God pities us.

TOPICAL BIBLE STUDY [?]

by Rev. B. Woudenberg

What is the best method to follow in society Bible study? This is always a question, even a problem each time we set up our society programs.

To begin with, the one thing that we must realize is that method of study is not the most crucial issue. Far more important than method is the matter of spirit, or of the attitude with which the participants take part in society meetings. No method can ever compensate for a bad attitude; and there is perhaps no method of study that will completely fail if the attitude of the society members is what it should be. Good society life is first of all a matter of spiritual self examination and dedication among the members. When you come to society it is your spiritual attitude which is the most crucial contribution anyone can make.

Nevertheless, once this is dealt with, there are certain advantages to using good methods and good approaches, especially those which will help the members to make their own preparation for the meetings and thus enable them to make their contribution to the study which is to take place. In this there should also be left room for variation and change. To just keep on doing the same thing year after year tends to stifle the kind of freshness and spirit, the sense of excitement and interest which should be sought, especially among young people who are first engaging themselves in the activity of searching out the truths of Scripture in study and discussion among each other. There should always be opportunity to use new and different approaches as long as they are adapted to growth in the knowledge of God and His Word and not to some other pursuit.

Perhaps the most common approach to this which has been followed through the years has been the direct study of particular portions of Scripture, most usually a chosen book of the Bible. This is a perfectly good and desirable method of approach.

If, however, there is one danger that should be avoided in this, it is too great a concentration upon details and individual verses. So easily a society can begin to focus upon individual details in words and

phrases until the overall message and the flow of thought that runs through the book is lost. A study of a book of the Bible should take fairly large portions at a time with concentration upon understanding the general message of the author, rather than with an analysis of its various details. Although the later approach might have its place among scholars, it is not generally beneficial for a society as a whole.

In turn, in all direct study of Scripture there is attention which should be paid to parallel portions of Scripture which present the same truths in different settings. We should always remember that the best and most reliable commentary on any portion of Scripture is another portion of Scripture teaching the same truth.

But there should also be a place for a more topical approach to the study of Scripture. That is, there is real benefit to be gained from taking a certain doctrine, a certain spiritual problem, a certain Scriptural truth, and tracing its development through the whole of the Bible. Such an approach does have advantages:

1. It gives an opportunity for developing experience in the use of basic Bible study tools by all members of the society, tools such as a good cross reference Bible, a concordance, and a good topical Bible. Besides this there are opportunities to make beginning use of such things as books on Dogmatics and doctrinal studies simply as a means of finding related references to various portions of Scripture teaching the same truths.
2. In the study period opportunity can then be given for everyone to present their findings of passages bearing on the subject in question. Each can participate on this level, bringing out the portions of Scripture he has found.
3. Discussion can then be made about the meaning of these various portions of Scripture and how they relate to each other.
4. Such study develops within the members of a society a familiarity with the whole of the Bible and an ability to find their way through the Scriptures in pursuit of any spiritual question with which they may need guidance.

But above all, regardless of what method of study is used, we should all try to find and develop the joy and sense of excitement which can come only from dealing in a lively way with the most vital body of truth this world has ever known, God's Word with its answer to every need of human life. To have pleasure in its study is among the richest blessings we can know.

The Beacon Lights' staff takes this opportunity to express our appreciation to Mr. David Moelker for his 7½ years of leadership as our Editor in Chief. We thank our covenant God for His care and guidance over us by providing a man such as Dave.

Especially the staff members can appreciate the time Dave devoted to the development of our magazine. His responsibilities included chairing monthly meetings, originating vibrant topics, the oversight of gathering material, encouraging authors to meet deadlines and being responsible to our readers for maintaining the quality of the Beacon Lights.

We commend Dave to God's care as he pursues other areas in the service of God's kingdom and covenant.

We also welcome Mr. David Harbach as our new Editor in Chief. Because he has served as associate editor, we are confident of his abilities. It is our prayer that God will continue to bless our staff under his leadership.

TIME

by Rev. Ronald Hanko

Time to get up out of bed. Time to go to school. Time to leave for Church. Time for Young People's Society. Dinnertime, bedtime, and time to begin yet another day. Never enough time! Springtime, summertime, and wintertime, and so "time flies." Perhaps it is true that as we grow older we become more aware of the swift, relentless passing of time, and yet even as young people we cannot help but feel the force of the words which we sing from Psalm 90, that "Time, like an ever-rolling stream, bears all its sons away" (Psalter #247, stanza 5).

As sons of time, all our life is ruled and limited by time as by a mighty Lord and Master. Yet it is not easy for us to understand or explain what time is and what place it holds in our lives. We feel as Augustine did when he wrote his **Confessions**:

> For what is time? Who can easily and briefly explain it? Who even in thought can comprehend it, even to the pronouncing of words concerning it? But what in speaking do we refer to more familiarly or knowingly than time? . . . What, then, is time? If no one asks of me, I know; if I wish to explain to him who asks, I know not. (Book XI, chapter xiv, paragraph 17).

Thus, with Augustine, we must go to Him Who is the Beginning of all things, and to His Word, in order to be taught by Him concerning the nature and purpose of time and concerning our calling as creatures of time. Not all our questions will be answered, but He will teach us in His Word all that is necessary for our salvation and comfort.

The very first thing that God's Word teaches us is that time is one of God's creatures. The first words of Scripture are, "In the beginning . . . ." Before God began the work of creation there were no evenings or mornings, no beginnings or endings, but only the eternal God Himself. Time itself began with the first creative act of the Almighty. Literally we read in Hebrews 11:3: "Through faith we understand that the **ages** were framed by the Word of God" (cf. also Heb. 1:2).

As Creator of time, God is also the sovereign Ruler of time. He is called in I Timothy 1:17, "the King of the ages" (KJV has "King eternal"). We confess this when we say with David, "My times are in Thy hand" (Ps. 31:15), for they are all governed, controlled and sent by Him.

This means, too, that God Himself is above time. He is eternal. With God we cannot speak of beginning and end, or of past and future. He does not and cannot say as we do, "I will be," or "I was." Always He is Jehovah, the "I am." It was as the eternal and only begotten Son that Jesus could say to the unbelieving Jews, "Before Abraham was, I am" (Jn. 8:58). With us only the fleeting moment of the present is before us, but with God, past, present and future are all everlastingly present. He knows the end from the beginning and from ancient times the things that are not yet done (Is. 46:10).

There is no difference to Him between a thousand years and one short day (II Pet. 3:8).

All that is not easy for us to understand. Augustine says concerning the children of men:

> They even endeavor to comprehend things eternal; but as yet their heart flieth about in the past and future motions of things, and is still wavering. Who shall hold and fix it, that it may rest a little, and by degrees catch the glory of that ever-standing eternity, and compare it with the times which never stand, and see that it is incomparable . . . ? Who will hold the heart of man, that it may stand still, and see how the still-standing Eternity, Itself neither future nor past, uttereth the times future and past? (XI, xi, 13).

Nevertheless, we must begin to understand, for we can count our days and know our end only in relation to the everlasting God. It is only when we learn to confess that all our times are in the hands of Him who is from everlasting to everlasting that we find comfort and hope while our days flee away.

The second thing that Scripture teaches us is that God rules time according to His eternal counsel. All times are "appointed times" determined before by God (Acts 17:26). Our Lord Jesus spoke again and again of His "time," and even as there was a God-appointed time for His ministry and work of reconciliation (Gal. 4:4, Matt. 26:18), so "to everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven" (Eccl. 3:1).

Each of these "times" is sent to us by God as an opportunity to think and act, to work and live our life. Solomon speaks of these "opportunities" in Ecclesiastes 3:2-11. For us as young people there are times for work and for play, opportunities for fellowship, for dating, for the study of God's Word and for prayer, for witnessing of the Truth to others, and for helping one another in the love of Christ. There are times of joy and sorrow, of solitude and of family happiness, of health and sickness.

But what we must remember is that all these opportunities are sent by God and are to be used, every one of them, as opportunities to honor and glorify Him. He is the One Who gives us every moment and also in this respect our times are not our own to use as we please, but belong to our Creator. That is why Solomon concludes the book of Ecclesiastes with an admonition to young people to remember their Creator (12:1).

It is only by God's great grace that we can do this. Sin has spoiled and corrupted our relationship to time so that apart from the wonderful works of God's grace in our hearts we use all our time apart from Him and in rebellion against His will. In the beginning time was man's servant. Through the passing of time he received every moment and every day as an opportunity to live as God's covenant friend and to enjoy the blessedness of the high position that God has given him. As long as he was obedient those times would continue for him as seasons of blessing.

When man fell time become his master. Even as we, without grace, now use time only for sin, so through time the punishment of sin becomes ours. Through the passing of time, death gains its dominion over us and brings us finally to hell. The folly of the wicked is exactly that they live as though their houses shall continue forever, and their dwelling to all generations. So it is that they continue in their wicked ways, using every moment to serve themselves. And through their misuse of the "times" that God has given them, they come under His wrath and perish like the beasts. Time, which they can only misuse, drives them to the grave like sheep where death in all its horror feeds on them forever (Ps. 49:11-14).

When Christ redeems us and delivers us from the power of death and hell, then He also restores to us a right relationship

to time, so that time is no more our enemy but our friend. In Christ there are once again times of blessings, of refreshment, of hope and peace and joy for the people of God. In Christ there is once again the possibility that they use the passing moments of life to glorify God and to work out their salvation before Him. In Christ is the grace found to redeem the times and seasons of our life. He is the One who makes everything beautiful in its time for us (Eccl. 3:11) and through whom we look beyond the sufferings of this present time to "the time to come," when all things shall be renewed and glorified in the new creation and when we shall reign with Christ in His Kingdom, world without end.

(to be continued)

Discussion Outlines of I Samuel

Chapters 11 and 12

by Rev. R. Hanko

A. Saul's victory over the Ammonites.
   1. Events immediately following Saul's election as king:
      a. What was the two-fold reaction to Saul's presentation as Israel's King in Mizpeh (chap. 10:24-27)?
      b. Do you think that either the joy of some or the dissatisfaction of others was for the correct reasons?
      c. Why did Saul return to his own home and his work instead of taking up his new position?
   2. The seige of Jabesh-gilead:
      a. Who were the Ammonites (Gen. 19:36-38)? What previous contact did Israel have with the Ammonites (Judg. 11:4ff)?
      b. Why were the men of Jabesh-gilead helpless against the Ammonites (Ps. 46:1-3, Jer. 2:12, 13)?
      c. Why did Nahash, the King of Ammon demand the right eyes of the men of Jabesh as the price of peace? Is this more than just arbitrary cruelty or the hatred of one nation for another? Cf. John 15:19, 17:14.
      d. Against Whom finally is this kind of hatred fulfilled (Ps. 69:19, 26)?
      e. Why was Nahash willing to give them seven days respite (Ps. 3:2, 71:10, 11)?
   3. Saul's victory:
      a. What was the reaction of the inhabitants of Gibeah to the message of the men of Jabesh? What did their reaction reveal?

b. Why was Saul so angry and why did he send the cut-up pieces of oxen through the land as a call to battle against the Ammonites (11:7)?
c. Were the words of the men of Jabesh to Nahash (11:10) a lie?
d. Was the victory of Saul the final victory over the Ammonites (II sam. 10-12)? Who had the final victory and why was that victory left for him and not given to Saul?
e. How did the men of Jabesh later show their gratitude to Saul (chap. 31:11-13)?

B. The confirmation of the kingdom.
1. The reaction of the people to the victory over the Ammonites:
a. What was wrong with the people's joy (Is. 31:1-3)?
b. In Chapter 11:15 we read that Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly. Why do you think that Samuel is not mentioned as rejoicing too?
c. Is it at all significant that only peace offerings are mentioned in this same verse? What kind of offering should the Israelites have brought?
2. Samuel's speech:
a. In what verses of his speech do we find the main point?
b. Why did Samuel review Israel's history in verses 6-11? Study once again Ps. 78:4, 7, 8.
c. Is there any evidence that the people were inclined to listen to Samuel?
3. A sign from the Lord:
a. For what sign did Samuel ask? What was so unusual about this sign (12:17a)?
b. Of what was this sign a picture to Israel as she still walked in the way of her sins (Ex. 19:16ff, Joel 2:1, 2)?
c. What was the reaction of the people to this sign to God? Is there any indication one way or the other as to whether their repentance was sincere?

C. Conclusions:
1. Concerning Israel:
a. What does this history show about Israel as the people of God: Read Joshua's address to the people in Joshua 24 and pay special attention to verse 19.
b. In what way does this history point to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (Luke 2:76-79, Eph. 2:10)?
2. Concerning ourselves:
a. What lesson concerning repentance does this history reinforce (Joel 2:12-14, Hos. 14:1-3ff, I John 1:8-10)?
b. What can be learned from this particular history concerning the relationship between our wickedness and the grace of God as it is revealed in Christ?

REV. ROBERT C. HARBACH

LINEN BANDS — OR **SHROUD?**

Not long ago a sermon was preached by a Florida pastor entitled, "The Shroud of Turin." The particular thing worthy of notice about it was that it was enough to leave a Reformed listener feeling like Paul, as mentioned in Acts 17:16, where "his spirit was **stirred** in him when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry." What the original language is saying at this point is that "his spirit was exasperated, irritated to sharp anger (it was set on edge)." It is the word from which we get our word **paroxysm** (cp. also Acts 15:39. Dr. Luke seems to like medical terms, and to be saying, Paul was having **a fit**!) Paul was overwhelmed with conflicting emotions, indignation, grief, shame, detestation, wonder, compassion. These emotions were stifling him as he attempted to stifle and conceal them from public detection. So the sermon referred to could be termed "shocking."

Perusing the printed copy, we notice some strange, if not, amazing statements. On page 2 we are urged "to examine the evidence" presented in this object of superstitious, idolatrous worship,—the "shroud." "Christianity is based on evidence," we are told, to which we may agree if this means that Christianity is based on Scripture-evidence. Archaeological evidence could be, and usually is, acquiescent evidence (where science acquiesces with Christianity), but can be no base for Christianity. "Base" has to do with "foundation," and Christianity's foundation is Christ and His Word (Mt. 7:24-28). As for the alleged "evidences of science," we must be careful, be patient, and wait for newer developments, as science is ever and often revising its findings. Perhaps such patience will pay off with the reward of discovering here or there an opinion of science harmonizing with Scripture. For Scripture is the divine revelation, infallibly true, requiring us

first to believe it, then to learn from it.

On pages 3 and 4 we come across some thin-ice "either/or's". For example (p. 3), the image on this shroud (shred!) is identified as that of "either a Semite or an Arab." But are not Arabs Semites? The Arabic language is a Semitic language! On page 4 we have this, "either a cunning craftsman in the fourteenth century put the traditional picture of Jesus on the shroud or else the shroud has been the source of the traditional picture of Jesus . . ." But neither the "either" nor the "or" is of any force, as the "or" clause is as questionable as the "either" clause. Further, there is no evidence, of any kind, that Jesus had long hair. For although John the Baptist was a Nazarite, Jesus was not. The Nazarites had long hair. The Lord, however, may very well have had short hair like the Caesars of that day. As a Jew, He would have a hair-style in keeping with Ezekiel 44:20. Avoiding extremes, according to this Old Testament injunction, He would neither shave His head, like heathen or Romish priests, nor allow His hair to grow long, taking the pose of a Nazarite. Long hair is in "style" again today, for some, but it is the style of the fop, the lounge-lizard, the carpet-knight, the hippy. The command through Ezekiel is to keep the hair short, because, for a man to have long hair is a shame (I Cor. 11:14); it is effeminate.

On page 6, the "shroud" is supposed to prove that "the body (of Jesus, RCH) was not washed." It is likely, however, as R. C. H. Lenski puts it, that "perhaps some of the sour wine of the soldiers was secured for removing the blood and for cleansing the wounds" before Jewish embalming and burial.

On page 8, appeal is made to argument from "probabilism." But Christianity is neither based on nor defended by probabilistic argument. For then the Christian position could just as well be refuted by probabilism. On the basis of probabilism is there a greater probability for the truth of Christianity than for its opposite? On this basis it would be more difficult to show that there is more defense for our (Christian) position that our (anti-Christian) opponent has for his.

Also on this same page there seems to be a failure to distinguish Jesus' intentionally and willfully first bowing His head and then relinquishing His spirit in death from the head after death (allegedly) being bent forward by the reaction of **rigor mortis**. The record of Scripture and the imaginings (guesses) of men must be kept quite distinct.

Now this **shroud**, as it is called, is said to have miraculously imprinted on only one side of it a "minutely detailed and accurate picture of the entire body," which imprint evidence, deemed all but infallible, is claimed to prove to be Christ's image. Hence, the apparent reason for so much ado over this superstitious nothing. Why in the world would a Presbyterian minister, as this one is, "push" such Romish trash! Such nonsense is close to the awe some feel for the 350 year old picture of the Virgin of Guadaloupe (cp. **Christianity Today**, March 18, 1983, p. 33) now at Mexico City. One scientist "feels" that this picture just has to be produced by no less than a miracle from heaven! (Was it let down in a sheet? Ac. 10:11) Isn't it amazing: scientists now on the one hand advocating what allegedly is a miraculously authentic picture of Jesus, and on the other hand supporting the invoking of deceased saints, angels or other creatures! With such things being swallowed the False Prophet will have no difficulty deceiving many with his lying wonders. (cp. Rev. 13:13-15 with II Thes. 2:9, 10).

As to our Lord's burial, the Bible records nothing of a "shroud," a winding-**sheet**; but it does have an astounding record of "linen bands" (cp. 19:40; 20:5-6). What is so astonishing about these "linen bands" is that they were

found "lying wholly undisturbed in their proper place with the body of Jesus gone out of them"! (Lenski). **That** is the wonder of the miracle of the resurrection of Christ! For those linen bands were **not** unwound, **nor** cut, **nor** stripped off the body, but were lying there just as wound about the limbs of the body, with the body gone, and the bands lying flat, still in their spiral conformation. No mere human being "wrapped round and round with bands like this could possibly slip out of them without greatly disturbing them." The bands "would have to be unwound, cut through, or cut and stripped off." They would then be strewn about, discarded, or heaped up into a pile. No such evidence appeared! But the biblical evidence of the bands lying there undisturbed speaks volumes! Therefore the evidence for Christ's resurrection is not any "shroud," but the linen bands reported in the Gospels.

So let those who prefer them have their religious relics and idolatrous trappings, while we, by grace only, continue to possess and prize the pure preaching of the Word. Let us remind ourselves of what we have been taught over and over as to that preaching. What is and must be preached, of course, is the gospel. This is the sole calling and only business of the church. The church must not become entangled with politics, cultural endeavors or all kinds of "gimmicks" which crowd the people off to the side and make the preacher a mere figure-head. Always the gospel remains fundamentally the same, regardless of who the preacher is, or who the auditors are, or what the circumstances are under which it is preached, or in what environmental situation this holy activity is conducted, in what country it is proclaimed. In a "Catholic" area, for example, the preacher is not to lean over as far as he can as a Protestant in the direction of veneration for remains and mementoes of saints. The gospel is the only true, divine therapeutic. But it is adulterated, corrupted and weakened when it is accomodated to man's sickness and weakness. Therefore, the preacher must keep reminding himself of his task to preach that God is God; that He is sovereign; that He works all things according to the counsel of His own will (Eph. 1:11); that He is holy and righteous, and so, a jealous God who will not give His glory to another; that all men are accountable to Him. Men must be told that they are sinners, law-breakers, covenant-breakers, all of which leaves them corrupt, guilty, condemned and without excuse. They are dead in sins and remain under the wrath of God as long as unconverted. So that the ground of salvation could never be in them. All they can do is to daily increase their debt to God. But God sent His Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but to pay that debt and save His people from their sins. Central to this gospel are the elements of the Cross, the Resurrection, the Ascension (of **Christ**, not of Mary!), the Return of the Lord, the Judgment Day and the New Heaven and Earth. This gospel must not be spoiled with "offers" and "invitations," but honored with the preaching of God's effectual call to repent and believe (Acts 17:30, 31; Rom. 10:13), of God's infallible will to do for His own good pleasure (Phil. 2:12, 13) to the realization of His completed workmanship (Eph. 2:8-10).

As for "shrouds" and images, hear and heed John Calvin: "**All** modes of worship which are merely of human invention are **detestable**! . . . all similitudes (images or pictures, RCH) are insulting to the Divine Majesty." (**Institutes**, I, XI, IV). Why should the office of preaching and teaching be resigned to images and pictures which only make the voice of the teachers as dumb as their images? (ibid., VII). Let us repent, and call on others to repent, and do (maintain) those first works in regard to pure preaching.

Blessedness For The Pure in Heart

by Rev. John A. Heys

To abbreviate, but also to attract attention and depict symbolically, several different kinds of signs have appeared lately that use the picture of a heart instead of the word love. Thus there are signs that read, "I love my country". These have the first and the last two words spelled out, but instead of the word love have a red heart pictured. It does take less room and attracts attention without a doubt. And the reason for this use of the heart in place of the word love is that the heart is considered to be the seat of love in man.

But the heart, according to Scripture, is more than that. The heart is the spiritual control center of man's being. In Proverbs 4:23 we read, "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." We may, therefore, call the heart the battery out of which all the spiritual energy flows that moves man in all his activities whether they be of mind, will, or strength. Even as the automobile battery supplies the spark which causes the gasoline to ignite and propel the car, and gives the radio and the lights the power to function, so the heart of man sends forth spiritual energy into every faculty and organ of man's body to enable him to be sustained in spiritual life and to do his work. With man, in the natural sense of his earthly life, the heart pumps the life-giving blood to every cell in his body so that these cells are supplied with the oxygen and nourishment that they need for their activities. And whereas the physical heart pumps blood to each cell and organ, the spiritual heart of man, out of which are the issues of life, pumps love. Love is the "blood" that supplies the members of the body of man; and his spiritual heart is continually pumping it throughout his whole body.

Now a pure heart is one that pumps love toward God to every organ, faculty, and member. It is a heart that has only love toward God in it. It beats only with the love of God. Adam was created that way. Since the fall however, men are always born with hearts full of love for self. No, man does not love the devil. The opposite of love for God is not love for the devil. And Satan did not attempt, and succeed in his attempt, to get man to love him. He wanted man to hate God. He wanted the blood of man's spiritual heart to be void of all love toward God. And to realize this he sought, and succeeded in his attempt, to get man's heart to pump love for himself, that is, for his own flesh. Man's heart cannot be empty. It always beats, as long as he lives, with some kind of love. And we are all born with impure blood, that is, with hearts that beat with love for self. And love for self is hatred against God. Just examine the temptation of Satan in paradise. It was designed to get man to cast his love toward God, to empty his heart veins and arteries of it, and to take into himself that love for self. He would be like God to decide for himself what was good and what was evil. He would perform an act of hatred against God in order to get rid of his love of God and to begin to seek self.

With that spiritual blood of hatred against God we are born. And as such we

are not citizens in the kingdom of God. All the citizens of that kingdom love God. Love desires and seeks to please. Love wants to keep God's law. We do not have that. Our hearts are full of impurity until we are born again, and the life of Christ, which is a life of pure love for God, is placed in us by the Holy Spirit, Who overcomes the works of the evil spirit.

Now another truth about the heart that we must remember, and was stated a moment ago though not stressed, is the fact that it is the center of our being. I called it a moment ago the spiritual control center. We often speak of the center of an object as its heart. We do that even of inanimate creatures that have no life. We speak of the heart of a city. Perhaps you have spoken once, or more than once, of the heart of a problem, or the heart of an issue. Well, being the battery out of which love flows to every member of our bodies, it is the center in a spiritual, not in a literal, physical sense. And therefore one who is pure in heart is pure clean through from his skin to the depth of his being. After all purity is the complete absence of anything foreign, of anything that does not belong there. Pure wool is nothing but wool. The advertisements that speak of one hundred percent pure are tautology. What is pure is one hundred percent that material. The pure of heart are those who are not simply pure in the center of their being. They are pure throughout. The pure in heart have nothing in their hearts but love toward God. When this spiritual control center is full of pure love toward God, it is going to control all the members in works of love to God.

A love to God that shows only on the face but is not in the heart is a sham, a false, make-believe love to God. It may deceive men, but it does not deceive God. And it does not reveal a man to be a citizen in the kingdom of God. God is not interested in a smile that is no deeper than the face, and in deeds of hand and foot that are to be found only in these members. They only shall see God and have that blessedness whose hearts beat with love to Him, and whose face and hands and feet and all their beings are controlled by that love. These are the citizens of the kingdom of God, which we have seen is a kingdom that exists for God and in which all revolves around serving and glorifying Him.

Now we must take into consideration, as already pointed out, that this Beatitude belongs to the series that reveals the characteristics of the citizens of the kingdom of heaven as they face their fellow men. Situated between a characteristic of being merciful and one of being peacemakers, there can be no doubt about it that we deal here with characteristics of these citizens as they face men. It certainly is true that as always we have to begin with man's relation to God. The law begins that way. And you cannot have a man pure in heart as far as his dealings with man are concerned unless you have a man whose dealings before God are controlled by a heart that beats with the blood of love toward God. And since love toward God will always move a man to do what is pleasing in God's sight, and what pleases Him in man is clearly written in the second table of the law as well as in the first, he who loves God will for God's sake walk in love toward his neighbour. That is why he is merciful and a peacemaker. But that is also why before men he is pure in heart. That is why he can be and is a peacemaker.

One who is pure in heart, therefore, is one whom you can trust, one whose word is true. Whereas the merciful will not kill you or do you bodily harm but will help you in your afflictions and woes, the pure in heart will not defile you but will keep you and himself sexually pure, will not steal your goods or lie to get what you have, or to defend himself in his wickedness. Nor will he covet what God gave you and kept from him. In other words the

citizen of the kingdom of heaven will be a model citizen also in his earthly, temporary kingdom here below. Because he loves God, he will love the neighbour. His will be a pure life, a holy life.

You will appreciate having this citizen of the kingdom of heaven as your neighbour. There will be no treachery or trickery in his dealings with you. You can accept his smile without fear of hidden motives. In the courts of the land you need a written statement signed by your neighbour, or your case is weak, and you are apt to lose. You do not, however, need to have the pure in heart sign anything. It is not simply his mouth, nor yet his hand that seems pure. He is pure in heart, and that pure heart will move him to keep his word and give with his hand, no matter how hard it may be for him to do as he promised. Why, if you had a nation full of pure in heart people, you would need no police or courts and judges. And there will be none of these in the new Jerusalem.

Probably your thoughts at the moment are, "If only such shall see God, then there is no one who is a citizen of the kingdom of heaven and will have that blessedness of seeing God. There just are no such people on this earth. And how could Jesus say all this to His disciples? There was not one of them even that was pure in heart, if that is the meaning." One thing we must remember in this connection is that while on this earth the citizens of the kingdom of heaven have an old man of sin and a new man in Christ. The unbelievers have only a man of sin. And it is this new man in Christ who is pure in heart. He has the life of Christ, Who is The Pure in Heart, in him, and that new man cannot and does not ever sin. That is right! Those born again have in them a life that **never** sins. Just turn to I John 3:9. There we read, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for His seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin because he is born of God." That life makes one pure in heart.

The pure in heart, Jesus said, have this blessedness that they shall see God. We deal here with a figure of speech. Scripture makes it abundantly clear in many passages that no man can see God in His essence. What we will see is His Son in our glorified human nature. He is God's face, and we certainly shall see Him.

But we have a figure of speech here also in the sense that seeing God refers to a full experience of the blessedness that is in Him for us. We shall also hear Him. We shall taste and touch Him. Yea, we shall even smell the joys in Him. To see a rose is to experience a thing of beauty, but how much richer also to smell its frangrance? Some objects must be heard as well as seen. What joy is there in seeing a massive pipe organ and a sheet of music compared with hearing that organ play that piece of music? And the pure in heart are not going to be cut off from any of the joyful experiences that go with living in God's fellowship. Seeing God then means knowing fully the love of God for us. Those whose hearts pump love toward God to all our members will be blessed with knowing God's love for them in all its fulness and with all its joys and delights.

But even as seeing the beauty of the rose demands a clear eye, and smelling its fragrance is impossible without a well-functioning set of nostrils, so seeing God is only for those pure in heart. If you please, only those whose hearts are full of love toward God are by Him equipped to know His love for them. One must be born again with that kind of heart to see God. Even as an AM radio cannot pick up FM broadcasts, so those only born once cannot see God. They do not even want to see God; and when He comes at the end of time they will call for the hills and mountains to cover them and hide Him from their view. A pure heart reveals that God has given us the spiritual equipment to know Him in His love toward us in Christ.

Scholarship Essays

The Role of the Teacher in the Face of Vain Deceit

by Amy Hulsken

Muggers, rapists, child molesters, kidnappers. These groups of people are growing in number, and are moving from the cities to the suburbs to the country. Parents tell their children not to talk to strangers, not to go anywhere alone, to stay inside after dark. There is no doubt that society is becoming increasingly dangerous to the physical well-being of children. However, society also threatens children's spiritual characters. The threats are more subtle, but they definitely are present. Society's attitude toward God and toward life in general is becoming more careless and permissive. Things such as homosexuality, abortion, and living together without the bond of marriage were once considered to be wrong; now they are accepted and even condoned by many members of society. This attitude is not only found in society outside the church, but it is creeping inside the walls of the church as well. Children don't have to be outside the confines of church circles to be threatened spiritually. Because children are susceptible to threats on their spiritual characters, their parents and their teachers must be capable of protecting them from the world's evil and must show them the truth.

False teachers are a major source of evil, and therefore a major threat to the church. II Peter 2:1 speaks of false teachers who will bring in damnable heresies. Matthew 24:24 says that some false prophets will be so convincing and will show such great signs and wonders that they will almost be capable of deceiving the elect. False teachers have the potential of affecting children to a great degree. From birth, through adolescence, and to adulthood, children can be easily swayed by those who are knowledgeable and confident about a subject, and who present it with some charisma. Children aren't always aware that the Billy Grahams, Jerry Falwells, and Rev. Moons of today use their "gift of gab" to make lies and outright heresies sound like the truth. Children don't always realize that the "proof" texts which supposedly teach a free offer of salvation are taken out of context. Only those who have a discerning ear and enough knowledge of the Word of God and faith in it can tell that these false teachers are indeed false. God gives all of His elect this discerning ear, but it, along with knowledge and faith, must be developed through proper instruction.

In order for children to receive this instruction, God gives to some the ability to teach. The calling of those with this special ability is given indirectly in Colossians 2:8. This verse directly instructs the students of the teachers, not the teachers themselves. If these students are children in our covenant schools, the verse also directly instructs their parents. Parents must "[b]eware lest any [one] spoil [them] through philosophy and vain deceit after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." Teachers, then, are instructed to

show that they do not bring vain deceit, but knowledge of God and love for Him. Teachers are called to instruct their students to have an unshakable foundation of love for God, and they must help their students build this foundation. Upon this foundation of love, knowledge of God, of His Word, and of His Creation is laid. By enabling students to distinguish between false teachers and teachers of the truth, this knowledge prepares them to take their places as responsible, knowledgeable adults in the Church of Christ.

Having received this calling, teachers can fulfill it in two ways. The first is by directly teaching students about God. In a Christian school, God must not only be found in religion classes, but in all aspects of the curriculum. Teachers also teach by example. Unless a teacher shows by his actions that he is qualified to bring the knowledge and love of God to his students, it will be very difficult for him to carry out his calling.

The world, as it heads for destruction, is becoming more evil than it has ever been. As part of the wicked world, false teachers, as they develop their ability to deceive, are also becoming more evil than ever before. Teachers of the truth, therefore, must be able to show that they do not bring vain deceit, and also that they can instruct children in the knowledge and love of God.

The Calling of the Teacher in the Face of Philosophy and Vain Deceit

by Karen Bulter

Col. 2:8 "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ."

Today as each school day carries out yet another installment in the education of covenant youth, outside the doors of our Christian schools stands a world grown apostate with worldly pleasures and philosophies, eager to infiltrate the walls and corrupt the young minds within. In the face of this stands the Christian teacher, an individual whose role has a vital impact not only on the mental development of each of his students, but more importantly on their spiritual development as well. For it is the teacher who plays a large part in providing the necessary tools and knowledge to study and apply the Word of God to our everyday walk.

Already in baptism covenant parents promise to see that their children are instructed to the utmost of their power in the fear of the Lord, and to this end God has graciously provided us with our Christian schools. When each child begins his education in our schools, the classroom serves as an extension of the home, and thus the teacher in a sense becomes a servant to the parents who have entrusted their children to his care. From day one a great deal of responsibility is placed on the teacher, for it is with him that each child spends a large part of each day, and it is to the teacher that they look for much of their guidance. If the strong spiritual

foundation found at home is not carried over to the classroom and the child is repeatedly exposed to "vain deceits," it is almost certain that some of this will take root and have great influence on the life of that student later on. Parents who raise their children within a Christian atmosphere at home, send their children to school expecting that atmosphere to be reciprocated by the teacher, who for a few hours each day has been given the responsibility of taking the parent's place in instructing the child. The teacher's task is a difficult one, for nearly everything he does has some sort of "ripple effect" on the students. For example, how often haven't we heard a child say, "Teacher said that. . . ." It seems that much of what a child becomes is merely a reflection of that which he has been taught by parents and teachers. If we fill students with fruitless knowledge of the world and ignore the responsibility to shape them according to the fear of God, we have failed, for the teacher's calling is to instill values and beliefs in their students that hold up to God's measuring rod of truth, and not those fashioned after the "rudiments of the world." If teachers take the covenant seed and instruct them as the world would have them do, they will only end up producing bitter fruits for their labors. But if those students are properly nurtured and corrected when going in wrong paths, the good fruits will multiply tenfold.

Today there is yet another realm of responsibility for the Christian teacher as awareness for the need for further development in the area of special education grows. As it stands now there is little access to Christian education for the handicapped students among our numbers, yet these children have equal, if not greater needs for the guidance that Christian education can provide. Within the public schools these children are not only exposed to all sorts of worldliness and an often indifferent attitude toward discipline, but they are also deprived of the vital incorporation of God's Word into their studies. It is often the case that these children start school at a younger age, and so are exposed for a longer period of time and at a more vulnerable time in their life to people whose world-of-life view is seldom compatible to our own. Because we are creatures of imitation, often regardless of efforts to maintain Christian values at home, there is a constant battle to undo things picked up so quickly from a teacher insensitive to the Christian values we hold dear. It is then that we can see how great an impact the teacher has on the minds and behavior of his students and realize the need to begin seriously considering the role of the Christian teacher in educating **all** of God's covenant seed, including those whom He has chosen to limit in some way. The task is not without obstacles, but the calling remains the same. It may seem to require longer and harder efforts with slower results, but in the end the Christian teacher can always reap reward in the promise God gives in Prov. 22:6, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it."

Have You Written Our Missionaries Lately?

Rev. Arie den Hartog
16 River Valley Close 15-22
Singapore 0923
Republic of Singapore

Rev. Steven Houck
1109 W. Rumble Road
Modesto, CA 95350

Rev. Ronald Van Overloop
6875 Sunny Dell Drive
Hueytown, AL 35023

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

by Paula Faber

NEWCOMERS:
God Blessed:

Mr. & Mrs. P. Scholten, of First Church in Holland, with a daughter, Melissa Joy, on December 14.

Rev. & Mrs. Cammenga, of Hull Church, with a daughter, Leanne Joy, on December 25.

Mr. & Mrs. B. Vander Veen, of Lynden Washington Church, with a son, Lincoln Anton.

Mr. & Mrs. V. Maas, of Lynden Wahington Church, with a son, Chad Allen, on December 7.

Mr. & Mrs. D. Tolsma, of Edmonton Church, with a daughter, Tammy Lee, on July 28.

Mr. & Mrs. F. Tolsma, of Edmonton Church, with a daughter, Nicole Marie, on April 19.

Mr. & Mrs. H. Ferguson, of Edmonton Church, with a daughter, Ashley Helen, on May 16.

Mr. & Mrs. D. Key, of First Church in Grand Rapids, with a son.

Mr. & Mrs. J. Keizer, of Hull Church, with a daughter, Kerri Beth.

Mr. & Mrs. R. Koole, of Hull Church, with a daughter, Rhonda Jo.

Mr. & Mrs. C. Bykerk, of Hudsonville Church, with a daughter, on December 10.

Mr. & Mrs. P. Wiersma, of South Holland Church, with a daughter, Lisa Marie.

Mr. & Mrs. B. Wories, of South Holland Church, with a daughter, Michelle Renae.

Mr. & Mrs. J. Van Baren, of South Holland Church, with a daughter, Corinne Dale.

Mr. & Mrs. H. DeVries, of Hope Church in Grand Rapids, with a daughter, Amy Lynn.

Mr. & Mrs. J. Engelsma, of Hope Church in Grand Rapids, with a daughter, Melissa Lea.

MARRIAGES:

Lynne Hunter and Kris Dempsey were joined in marriage December 29.

Albert Nieuwenkamp and Maryse Van Gelderen were joined in marriage September 16.

MEMBERSHIP TRANSFERS:

Southeast Church received the papers of Rich Hahn from the John Knox Presbyterian Church.

Hudsonville Church received the papers of Craig Tinklenberg from our Faith Church.

Hope received the papers of Miss Sandra Besselsen from our Hope Church in Redlands.

Hope Church received the papers of Karl Van Oostenbrugge from the First Netherlands Church.

South Holland Church received the baptismal papers of Gretchen Kamps from our South Holland Church.

Hull Church received the papers of Fred Hanko from our Faith Church.

Faith Church received the papers of Mr. and Mrs. H. Pastoor Jr. and 3 children

from our First Church in Grand Rapids.

Hudsonville Church received the papers of Mr. and Mrs. C. Booth from our First Church in Grand Rapids.

Holland Church received the papers of Mrs. T. Hoolsema from our First Church in Grand Rapids.

Hope Church received Mrs. Eugene Kamps as a baptized member.

South Holland Church received as members the families of Fred and Rose Iwema and 2 baptized children; and Richard and Judith Reyenga and 2 baptized children from the First Christian Reformed Church of Des Plaines, Il.

Southeast Church received the papers of Mrs. Mary Kamminga.

Southeast Church received the baptism paper of Brian Van Farowe from Shawnee Christian Reformed Church.

Hudsonville Church received the baptism papers of Robert Prins from First Jenison Chr. Ref. Church and David Schimmel from our Hope Church in Grand Rapids.

First Church in Grand Rapids received the papers of Mr. & Mrs. S. Newhof from Orthodox Reformed Church.

Lynden Washington received the papers of Ernie Tjoelker from Everson Chr. Ref. Church and H. Buiter from our South Holland Church.

Loveland Church received the papers of Cheryl Dotson from our South Holland Church.

Faith Church received the papers of Mr. & Mrs. Clarence Pastoor from our Hudsonville Church.

Loveland Church received the papers of Mr. J. Van Ginkel from our Doon Church.

CONFESSION OF FAITH:

Patricia Zylstra made public confession of faith on May 29 in Edmonton Church.

Brian Van Farowe made public confession of faith on January 1 in Southeast Church.

Shelly De Young, Denise Van Baren, Dave Van Overloop and Glenda Zwak made public confession of faith on December 18 in Hudsonville Church.

Sara Engelsma, Sharon Kamps, Bob VanDenTop, Joyce VanDenTop, and Karl Van Oostenbrugge made public confession of faith on December 25.

ACTIVITIES:

The Federation Board sponsored a roller skating party. Lynden, Loveland and South Holland Young People also had skating parties.

The Loveland, South Holland and First Church in Holland young people went caroling during the Christmas season.

On January 15 Covenant Chr. High School's Choir and Chamber Choir presented a concert.

Hull, Edmonton and Loveland young people sponsered singspirations.

January 26, The Young People and Young Adults had a volleyball-basketball night in Kalamazoo.

Because God has no beginning and no ending, He can know no change. He is everlastingly "the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (James 1:17).

The Attributes of God, Arthur W. Pink, p. 37

LIFE IS BUT A WEAVING

My life is but a weaving
Between my God and me;
I may not choose the colors,
He knows what they should be.
For He can view the pattern
Upon the upper side,
While I can see it only
On this the under side.

Sometimes He weaveth sorrow
Which seemeth strange to me;
But I will trust His judgment,
And work on faithfully.
T'is He who fills the shuttle,
He knows just what is best;
So I shall weave in earnest,
And leave with Him the rest.

At last when life is ended,
With Him I shall abide;
Then I will view the pattern
Upon the upper side.
Then I shall know the reason
Why pain with joy entwined
Was woven in the fabric
Of life that God designed.

Standard Bearer
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