BEACON LIGHTS

FOR PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH

JUNE-JULY 1990

"Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungered and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger and ye took me in . . . . And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me . . . ." Matthew 25:34ff Quoted in "The Biblical Teaching On "Sympathy' "

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EDITOR'S NOTES: June / July 1990

by David Harbach

The theme of the 50th Annual P.R.Y.P.'S Convention is "Love, The Bond of Perfectness."Rev. Terpstra, the first speaker, will talk about "The Gift of God." If his keynote speech, "The Holy Spirit — His Work in the Economy of Salvation," given at the International Reformed Conference, is any indication of what you can expect, then get ready for an exciting and thoroughly Reformed speaker. Rev. Haak will speak on "Our Calling to Walk in Love" and Rev. Gritters will speak on "Its Ever-Abiding Nature." Both of these ministers have manifested an untiring love for young people.God has given us three wise young ministers that we will want to hear.

The discussion outlines for the convention are included In this issue. Rev. Dale Kuiper has prepared an outline on "Christian Fellowship," Rev. Arie DenHartog has prepared one on "Showing Christian Love to People from Other Churches," and Rev. Ron VanOverloop's outline is on "Judging One Another In Love." I would say from the content of these outlines that you are in for some serious and exciting discussions at the convention.

You have sometimes heard the expression "Don't do as I do, but do as I say?." All too often this

is meant to be an excuse for someone who wants us to do something they are unwilling to do themselves. In "Beloved Children" Rich Peterson, in his editorial, explains two ways that our Lord teaches us the way we should go.

Do you believe in the Fatherhood of God for all men? If your reply was yes then you believe in the humanistic concept of sympathy, which is nothing but a mere human-empathy. Rev. Lubbers has prepared three interesting articles on "The Biblical Teaching On Sympathy.' "We are thankful that God has raised up a faithful and trustworthy minister to write for us on this most important aspect of our Christian lives.

Mr. Engelsma, the father of Prof. Engelsma, and who has been an elder in Hope Protestant Reformed Church, Walker, MI for many years, writes his response to the question from a young adult, "Isn't It alright to date in the Lord someone who may not be from the Protestant Reformed Churches? You will find his answer very encouraging as you seek to date and eventually to marry in the Lord. For those of you who want to write a question for Mr. Engelsma or respond to his articles, his address is 1315 Su-Lew SW, Walker, MI 49504. Mr. Engelsma writes that he is presently taking care of his wife Dena who has had brain surgery and he may not be able to respond to the other questions sent to him immediately. We pray God's richest blessings on Mr. & Mrs. Engelsma in this time of his wife's recovery and look forward to his answers to our questions in future issues.

Also in keeping with the thought concerning dating and marriage is the second installment of the outlines that were used on the occasion of the 1989 Fall Retreat which had a main theme of "Learning God's Will". The outlines cover three thoughts: the general principles for learning God's will, learning God's will in dating and marriage, and learning God's will in your vocation. These outlines by Pastors Charles Terpstra and Ronald Van Overloop will be finished in the next issue. We hope that you will use these outlines in your society for the godly instruction that we need in these days of ungodliness.

Mrs. Brands provides us with a look at Ecclesiastes 1:1-11. What do you think the words "under the sun" mean? Perhaps you think it means what man does in the daytime, or what man does on earth. Read this article to find a striking meaning to these words of King Solomon.

Lora has provided us not only the May Church News but also the most current news she could write up for us from the church bulletins she has received. Thanks, Lora!

We welcome Brian Kuiper from Hope P.R.C. in Walker, MI as our new Finance Manager. What surprised me the most about Brian was his immediate acceptance to take on the responsibility. We appreciate your willingness and eagerness (he attended his first B.L. staff meeting already knowing what he had to do) to serve the kingdom of God in this capacity and look

forward to your guidance during our staff meetings.

Truly we are blessed with faithful young people who are willing to serve God and our churches!

The Beacon Lights has recently been audited by the U.S. Postal Service concerning our second class permit. This yearly audit assures the post office that we are managing our second class permit properly. We are happy to report that everything is in good order. What we did find was the need for some of you, dear subscribers, to pay for your subscription and for others of you to provide us with current addresses. We ask you to please return the renewal cards promptly with your payment and any change of address. Thank you.

As a staff we want to express our Christian sympathy to Mitch Dick and Rev. C. Hanko in the death of Mitch's wife, Ellen, Rev. Hanko's grandaughter. "Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord; (For we walk by faith, not by sight:) We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord." I Cor. 5:6-8.

BELOVED CHILDREN

by Rich Peterson

Rich Peterson is a member of our Grandville congregation where he has served as elder and is currently the superintendent of the Sunday School and correspondent secretary of the church extension committee. He has seven children from teen to toddler. He is a graduate of our Protestant Reformed Pre-seminary and has attended Seminary. Later he graduated from Hope College with a B.A. in Psychology, and pursued his master's in Business Administration and Industrial Psychology.

In the Bible our Lord has seen fit to teach us the wondrous Gospel of Salvation in many different ways. One of those ways of instruction is by means of the parable. A parable is generally defined as an earthly truth that sets forth a heavenly reality. Our Lord Himself has established this relationship between the earthly and the heavenly when He said, "the Kingdom of Heaven is like

unto...". By means of such instruction in His Word not only do we come to understand the heavenly, but we are made able to understand God's purposes for the earthly aspects of creation which are used to explain the heavenly. There is as it were a reciprocal relationship of learning.

Another method of instruction our Lord uses which is similar to the parable in that there also exists a reciprocal relationship, is the use of the analogy. Personally, I have found in the study of the Scriptures that when the Bible uses analogies that compare human relationships to our relationship to God, not only does one grow in spiritual knowledge of God but the human relationship, one to another, grows in love as we are instructed: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." The earthly-human family relationships which we experience is a picture of the heavenly relationship we have with God. However, we must note that such earthly relationships are only pictures of the heavenly. They are imperfect at best. Deformed and marred with sin, manifested by: bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking with all malice (Eph. 4:31).

An example of an analogy between an earthly family relationship which is a picture of the heavenly reality that is set forth for us in the Bible is adoption. Although similarities do exist especially in the legal aspects, there are differences because of sin. Consider the following: When parents adopt an infant child, that child's emotions toward its parents are neutral. There is neither love nor hate. And through much love and nurture the parents can only hope that the child will grow to love its parents in later years. But there is no guarantee the child will love its parents in the years to come. However, spiritual adoption is different in this regard. When we became the adopted children of God, our emotions toward God were not neutral. We by nature hate God, and would resist Him in all things. But God conforms us to the image of his Son (Romans 8:29). God makes us love Him by the power of His grace. And not only that, we are made to look like Him, though in principle now, fulfilled when we see Him face to face in Glory. This is something earthly adoption can not do. Therefore we must always keep in mind the limitations the analogy may contain in comparing the earthly to the heavenly. And those limitations may never be set by our minds but only by the Scripture Itself. By allowing the Scripture to guide and instruct us in this area of family relationships as a picture of our heavenly relationship to God as Father we will become better equipped to deal one with another and thus fulfill the Law of Love.

The most striking analogy our lord uses to teach us the fundamentals of our relationship to God as His children and that is also the cornerstone of the Christian home is found in Ephesians 5:1&2. "Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given

himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour." Over the years I have read many books and articles, and have heard many good sermons on such topics as the necessity for discipline in the home, parental involvement in our children's instruction, and ways in which to become a better God fearing parent. But all of this I believe to be subservient to the basic truth our Lord instructs us here in this text: to walk in love. If we as parents or expecting parents fail to apply to our hearts the teaching of this text as the foundation of our Christian homes, then discipline or instruction or even the development of our children will be impaired or made less effective. For this reason I feel compelled to share with you some thoughts regarding this text and how I as a parent try to apply this truth in the family relationship.

The earthly analogy we have here in Ephesians 5:1 is not very apparent at first glance, but with the use of a concordance the clarity can be improved. The word "followers" literally means imitator; the Greek word being mimetes from which we derive our English word mimic. And the word "dear" literally means beloved; the Greek word being agapetos, the Latin equivalent being amore from which we derive our English word amorous: to be overflowing with love. Therefore we may read the text as: Be ye therefore imitators of God,as beloved children. What! Imitate God! How is that even thinkable; we who are sinful and inclined to all evil, imitate the Holy, Perfect, and only Just God in Whom is no darkness. But that is what we are instructed to do. And the earthly analogy being used here: do children imitate their parents? And if so, why? What is their motivation to do so?

To properly understand the analogy present here in this text we must first begin with the earthly example. Yes, contrary to todays mind-set in which children even at a young age are encouraged to be their own individual self, do and will imitate their parents; if they have the assurance of their parent's love. What was an assumed-to-be-true fact of life during the lifetime of the apostle Paul, is not so in today's society for various reasons. Young children are taught in school and encouraged toward self-expression so that the child's creativity and developmental processes are not hindered by parent(s)' prejudices. And parent(s) have their own self interest in careers and recreational activities. In short, the entire traditional family structure has been undermined at the cost of society's future children.

Even though our Christian families are not faced with these evils there are dangers we do face in that we oftentimes do not allow our young children to imitate us as parents. We must always keep in mind that fact that a child will imitate his parents as an expression of love. He wants to be like father because he loves him. Or she wants to be with mother because she loves her. The desire of the young child to be with father or mother and to imitate their parents is rooted in reciprocal

love. Father and mother express their love to the child in many different ways, but the child only knows one way: that of imitation. The problem arises when the parents are not aware of this fact. It seems as though the child will do things at the most inconvenient moment or at the most unlikely place and the result is oftentimes expressing our anger instead of approval for knowing that our children love us.

In that we must strive not to discourage our children when they imitate us, we must always take the time to control and guide such acts of imitation. For example, let's say a father, being observed by his young son, has just finished pounding a nail in the wall to hang a picture. The father places the hammer down and goes to get the picture to be hung. Upon his return he discovers that his son is in the process of pounding holes in the wall. The son expects his father's approval; he receives his wrath. And if this situation repeats itself the child will learn not to imitate; not to express love. Therefore, parental control and guidance are imperative not only for the physical well-being of the child, but also for his development and nurture.

In the example stated, if the father had controlled the environment and guided the activity of his son, the results would have been much more favorable. The father should not have left his tool where his son could reach it. And if the son expresses a desire to pound too, let him: but where such activity will cause no harm. We must keep in mind that the attention span of a young child is short, and the short time it takes to allow our children to express their love toward us is well worth the investment. Never look upon our children's activity of nature as being an inconvenience but rather an investment. Take time to assure them of your love.

As stated earlier, it is the nature of a young child to express his love by means of imitation. Yet, a child does not limit his expressions of love only to the parents; other brothers and sisters are also recipients. This fact is important for our young people to keep in mind if they have younger brothers or sisters. There are places to go, things to do, and people to see, and in the business of life the young brother or sister is left out or pushed aside. Not now, maybe tomorrow, are excuses too often heard.Rather take time, make the investment. Not only love your brother or sister, but let them express their love to you. Never think of their actions in terms of your convenience.

Not only is a child's imitation an expression of love, it is also the primary means of learning in young children. All physical activity: walking, talking, eating, and social behavior are learned by imitation. And more importantly, so is spiritual activity learned by imitation even at a young age. This is learned not only from the child's parents, but also from the older brothers or sisters, our young people.

"Therefore": this word of Ephesians 5:1 brings us back to

the preceding chapters verses 31 & 32. "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speakings, be put away from you with all malice:" In short, the apostle is saying: stop your fighting and bickering. When parents fight one with another and the child observes this: he is learning. When older brothers and sisters fight and speak evil of one another and the young brother or sister observes this: he is learning. And he will imitate. This is the nature God has created in children. Learn by observation, perfect by imitation. Or, do we as parents and young people set forth the example that we read in verse 32: "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." Possible? Yes. We are called God's beloved children, adopted in Christ Jesus through His one complete and perfect sacrifice to God, accepted as a sweet smelling savour. Easy? No. Our sinful nature strives to dominate us in all that we do. But in as much as we experience God's love toward us through His work of salvation in us we are exhorted to imitate God by the way of His instruction to us in verse 32: be kind one to another, tenderhearted, and forgiving. Do this and you walk in love. Do this and you imitate God!

Just think of it. If we as God-fearing parents and young people seek to imitate God by being kind, tenderhearted, and forgiving one another, and our young children see and imitate the same, then we truly will have Christian and covenant homes.

We have often heard it said" don't do as I do, but do as I say". The instruction our Lord gives us in this text is just the opposite: do as I do and do as I say. Without the consistency of word and deed, discipline, admonitions, and instruction has little effect and often leaves our children confused and discouraged. But consistency is profitable. If you confess to be a Christian, then act as one, not only to the adults of the church, but also to your children, and brothers or sisters.

"But that others who are called by the gospel, obey the call, and are converted, is not to be ascribed to the proper exercise of free-will, whereby one distinguished himself above others, equally furnished with grace sufficient for faith and conversions, as the proud heresy of Pelagius maintains; but it must be wholly ascribed to God . . . ." Canons of Dordt, III, IV, Article 10.

Singspiration Schedule

August Pre-Convention Hudsonville

ECCLESIASTES 1:1-11

LETTER #5
What Profit Has Labor Without God?

by Mrs. H. Brands

Chapter 1 of ECCLESIASTES forms the introduction to the book. This introduction has two main parts. We will study the first part of this introduction, verses 1-11, today. Next time, we will study the second half of the chapter, from verse 12 to the end.

Solomon's introduction, as I said, has two parts. In Chapter 1:1-11 he tells us who he, the author, is, and then gives us the basic **theme** of his sermon "What profit hath a man of all his labour. . .?" In Chapter 1:12-18 he then gives us the reasons why he chose to preach this sermon: basically, because he had the **ability** and the **calling** as well as the strong desire to preach this sermon.

Now look at verses 1-11.

A. First, he introduces himself, verse 1.

"The words of the Preacher, the Son of David, king in Jerusalem."

It is rather obvious who he is, isn't it? Although he never mentions his name, this is because his authority rests not in himself but in the fact that he is the son of David, possessing the promises of David, and on that basis also he is able to be a Preacher. As Solomon, he is nothing. But God gave him wisdom and called him to preach that wisdom! And this wisdom is centrally found only in Christ, the seed of David. He speaks in Christ!

B. He introduces his theme, verses 2 and 3.

"Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher,
vanity of vanities; all is vanity.
"What profit hath a man of all his labour
which he taketh under the sun?"

Solomon kind of turns backwards the way things are usually done here. He first gives the answer and then asks the question!

Look first at his question and pay special attention to the last three words, "under the sun". These words are key words throughout the book. Always Solomon is asking the question. "What profit is there APART FROM GOD?" and he expresses this idea by those words "under the sun." Whenever we hear him saying he is looking at things as they are done under the sun, we know he is looking at things as men see them who forgot God. This is crucial to understanding the book as we read it.

So, the question the book addresses is, "What profit or value or meaning is there to life apart from God?"

And, the answer to that question, repeatedly throughout the book, is his

theme as stated here: "None!" Apart from God, all is vanity. Apart from God labor is meaningless, like a puff of vapour that blows away in the wind and is forever gone.

C. He presents his main supportive argument, verse 4-11.

He has said that all things are meaningless apart from God. How is he going to prove this? He will show this by observing that all things on this earth are repeated over and over and over, monotonously, without future generations even recalling the former things and realizing that things are being repeated.

Things are repeatedly repeated? Already by way of introduction, he gives four examples of this:

1. PEOPLE repetitiously live and then die. This happens over and over without end!
2. THE SUN repetitiously rises and then sets. How boring! Why never a variation?
3. THE WIND whirls and whirls and whirls on the same circuits, over and over, tiresomely.
4. THE WATER goes over and over through its cycle "river-sea-air-rain", "River-sea-air-rain".

And all these things, he points out, are laborious. They are busy-busy-busy, work-work-work, go-go-go, on and on, over and over. . .and to what avail? It is the same things over and over and, furthermore, no one remembers them once they are finished. No profit!

That is the theme of the book. That is life apart from God. Is there any profit in our work? Is there any meaning to life? Why repeat what has already been done before and, just as surely, forgotten before?

Thank God the book will not end there! Thank God that the Preacher will bring us to God! If we will find meaning and value in life, we must reject all life apart from God and join the Preacher in seeking God, "whom to know is eternal life."

But thank God also for the warning. As we read the book, we will be recognizing ourselves in many of the godless outlooks of life presented here. By nature, we too seek the pleasures and treasures of this life. God must call us, by His grace, out of this darkness and into the marvelous light of Christ. He must remove from us the love of these things and draw us into a love of Himself, into service of Himself.

All study of God's Word has that as its goal: to draw us away from sin and unto service of God in purity. May God bless this study also to the strengthening of our service of Him in faith.

Letter#5. Theme: ECCLESIASTES 1:1-11:

"What Profit Has Labor Without God?"

Questions:

1. How does Solomon identify himself?
   Why doesn't he give his own name?
2. Solomon's theme has a negative aspect and a positive aspect.
   a. Negatively, state his theme.
   b. Positively, state his theme.

3. What do the words "under the sun" imply?

4. What four-fold proof does Solomon give of the meaningless of activity (labor) without God?

LEARNING GOD'S WILL

CONCERNING DATING AND MARRIAGE

by Rev. Terpstra and Rev. Van Overloop

(Dating is a relatively new, cultural innovation of the last century in the Western world. As a result the Bible has no explicit commands on how to date. Therefore, we learn God's will about dating by considering what the Bible says about marriage and about healthy relationships.)

I. What the Bible says about marriage leaves implications for dating.
   A. Consider that God's creation of the first marriage was occasioned by the need to overcome man's loneliness.
      1. Am I preparing myself to be such a partner as to have **Christian** fellowship?
      2. Is the one to whom I am attracted suited to me in this way?
   B. What should I look for in a husband or a wife?
      1. Is this the kind of person who will provide a protecting fellowship when my needs are exposed?
      2. Is this the kind of man that I can respect so fully that I want, with God's help, to be his submissive wife?
      3. Is this the kind of girl to whom I, with God's help, would be able to give a Christ-like love?
   C. Because marriage is exclusive (no parents and no other people) and permanent, is your relationship with this person capable of this quality of devotion and commitment?

II. What the Bible says about healthy relationships.
   A. Learn to communicate. If two cannot discuss what they think and feel about life, God, and each other, their relationship is on shaky ground.
   B. Learn to share: what you think and feel, what you have and do. Learn to make mutual decisions.
   C. Get to know each other and each other's parents.
   D. Read the Bible and pray together. If you cannot, then your relationship is unhealthy!! If each is not willing to obey God's Word now, then trouble

lies ahead!

E. Realize that each is an individual as well as the two being a couple before God.

III. Dangers.

A. The powerful, ennobling, happy emotion of "being in love."

B. The trap of sexual desire.

IV. Dating Guidelines.

A. Consider whom you date. Never date someone who clearly differs from you in core values of religion and morals.

1. Reason: friendship is mutually influencing (cf. Gen. 6).
2. Reason: dating is the first step in a process which can lead to marriage.

B. Plan your dates and activities together.

1. Set moral standards. As you date more frequently, talk about your moral standards.
2. Pace your relationship, by being realistic and careful about the powers of sexual desires (no Christian young person thinks they will have pre-marital sex, but. . .). Avoid deliberate temptation!

C. Prayerfully study the principles of God's Word alone and together.

D. Examine whether you are meant for one another, by considering the questions under I. above. Also in this regard it is the wise child who consults with his parents.

SHOWING CHRISTIAN LOVE TO PEOPLE FROM OTHER CHURCHES

by Rev. A. Den Hartog

It is inevitable that we in our Christian life will come into contact with people from churches other than those of our own denomination. We will meet such people at school and at work and in the course of social interaction with the world. How we act towards such people is a very important aspect of our Christian witness. We believe of course that some of these may be genuine Christians and some will not be. By God's grace we must give a good testimony before them and also seek to win them by our actions and testimony to the faith that God in His grace has given to us.

1. Why are there so many different denominations? How must we view this situation?

2. Are the differences among various professing Christian churches important? Are some of these differences greater than others?
3. What are some of the major distinctive truths that God has given to us as Protestant Reformed Churches? Are these distinctive truths important and precious to us? Do we really have reason to be separate as churches from even other Reformed Churches?
4. Can we relate our distinctive Protestant Reformed truths to other Christians? Have you ever talked to someone outside of our churches in a personal way about the truths we hold dear in our churches? What was the reaction of those you talked to? Have you ever invited someone from another church to come to church or young people's society with you? Have you ever accepted an invitation to go along to another church?
5. What should be our attitude towards Christians from other churches? Perhaps it is good for us at this point to be self-critical. Do we sometimes "turn people off" by the attitudes we reflect? What is wrong with this? Have you done this yourself? How can we change this?
6. How much should we discuss differences of beliefs with other Christians? Is this necessary? Or could we perhaps just ignore those differences and focus only on the things that we have in common?
7. Is it necessary sometimes in our Christian life to condemn what others believe? Evaluate the very commonly held notion in America that everyone has the right to believe what he wants to and it is always wrong to criticize the beliefs of others. Is there a proper and an improper way to judge what others believe? Do we sometimes wrongly offend people from other churches? On the other hand must we also be ready to expect that the truth of God's Word will bring offense and division?
8. Can we have Christian friendship and fellowship with people from other churches? Is it possible that through such friendship we might be led away from the truth of God's Word? Is it also possible that such friendships might strengthen us in the knowledge of God's Word and even in what we believe as Protestant Reformed people?
9. How can we be warm and personal and inviting to Christians from other denominations without compromising the truth we believe?

The things we do
will soon be past
unless we do
the things that last

the life we build
may never stand
for we may build
on sinking sand

the world thing
for which we slave
can never bring
us from the grave

the things above
like truth and love
will always be
eternally.

CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

by Rev. D. Kuiper

I. Christian Fellowship is a Covenant Activity (Communion of Saints)
   A. It is based on having fellowship with the Triune God.
      1. The Essence of the covenant is friendship and communion
         a. In the deepest sense, this is found between Persons of the Trinity.
         b. Hence: covenant **is** God's covenant, He is the covenant God.
      2. We were the enemies of God, but Christ has slain the enmity between us and God. Eph. 2:16
      3. Thus, Christ has established peace and friendship between God and all the elect. John 15:14-15
      4. Basic to Christian fellowship is that we personally walk with God (Gen. 5:22, Gen. 6:9, James 2:23) and with Christ (Matt. 16:24)
   B. Having fellowship with God, we have fellowship with one another.
      1. This fellowship reaches out to include everyone in the family of God. (I John 5:1)
      2. This fellowship has an antithetical aspect to it, that is, it embraces some and consciously rejects others.
         a. Spend some time with James 4:4, II Cor. 6:14-18, Ps. 26:4-5.
         b. Why do some young people seem to prefer friends from the world to those from the church?
      3. Jesus says in Matt. 7:20, "Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them."
         a. How does this idea relate to our subject?
         b. Does association with fellow P.R. young people guarantee Christian fellowship?
   C. Christian Fellowship is never at the expense of the Truth, but is always in the Truth.
      1. It is a rich activity worked in the children of God by the Holy Spirit. The entire chapter of I Cor. 12 pertains here; see especially verses 8-13 and 22-27.
      2. It is an activity which flourishes in the sphere of holiness. (I John 1:7)
      3. What place does the Law of God have in Christian Fellowship?
      4. What activities promote true fellowship?
         a. Are some activities more useful than others?
         b. Do sports and games lend themselves to this? To a very high degree?

II. Christian Fellowship Presents Difficulties and Opportunities.
   A. The difficulties are due to the old man of sin in us (pride, fleshly lusts).
      1. The tendency to be a respecter of persons. (James 2:1ff)
      2. The tendency to be selfish in friendship, seeking friendship with those who enhance our lives, our image; snubbing those who can't add anything to us.
      3. The tendency to use the tongue in an evil way. (Rom. 3:13ff, James 3)
      4. the tendency to give in to feelings, lusts, peer pressure.
   B. The opportunities are due to the new man of Christ in us.
      1. To grow in faith. How?
      2. To assist those, and encourage those, who are in need. How can these be identified?
      3. To form life-long friendships, and even to find one's life mate.
      4. In all this, to glorify our covenant God Who has made us His friends.

(One last question: If you are having a wonderful time at the convention, caught up in the activities, making new friends; but there is even **one** who is lonely and miserable, always on the outside looking in, wishing that he or she had not come . . .would you consider the convention a success?)

I. THE BIBLICAL TEACHING ON "SYMPATHY"

by Rev. G. Lubbers

"Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth those that fear Him" Psalm 103:13

Forward:

It is upon the friendly invitation of the Staff of **Beacon Lights** that I undertake to write a few thoughts on the subject of Christian sympathy-empathy. I am deeply grateful for this singular privilege to write a few thoughts for the hearts of the readers of this magazine. It is also, of course, a great responsibility which requires some painstaking searching of the Scriptures on this worthwhile subject. It touches the lives of all of us.

It is nearly the semi-centennial year of the publication of our little Young People's publication. Think of it, people who are seventy years old now were the young people who began the publication of Beacon Lights. It was the tender mercies of God that made this possible and a reality. God raised up faithful and trustworthy men and women

throughout these years. Great is and was God's faithfulness in tender mercies, which are new each morning.

May our paper continue to be a "beacon light" on a candlestick, serving to let the light of the Scriptures shine as a light upon our path and a guide for our youthful, and not so youthful feet. Such is our earnest prayer.

* * * * *

The subject "sympathy" is indeed as interesting as it is important. It requires a bit of loving sympathy of Christ in our hearts even to discuss the subject in an inspiring and edifying manner. It is also true that one must have real Christian empathy in our hearts to understand that in this entire question, we must know how to fulfill the law of Christ. The Bible states this so very simply: bear one another's burdens (Gal. 6:2).

What comes to mind are the very solemn words uttered by Christ as recorded in Matthew 25:34ff,

"Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungered and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger and ye took me in. . . . And the king shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. . . ."

Here is a living expression of Christian empathy. Such was the keynote of the exhortation to Israel concerning their calling to befriend the "strangers" in their midst, as well as the fatherless and the widows (Deut. 24:19, 20, 21). Israel had walked in the shoes of such strangers in the land of Egypt for 400 years! They could have sympathetic-empathy in their hearts for the needy and the helpless!

At the same time in Israel's deliverance there is the Divine convenantal-sympathy of Jehovah for His people. We read in Exodus 3:7 loving, sympathetic words of Jehovah:

"And the LORD said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters: for I **know** their sorrows."

Yes, He came to succor them. "As a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him."

These words, taken from Psalm 103:13, are deeply profound words of truth; they are filled with Divine mysteries of His sovereign love and tender compassion. Let me say this very reverently. There was deep pain in the heart of God to see His beloved children languish and suffer under the heel of cruel Pharaoh in relentlessly persecuting His beloved people, who are the apple of His eye! When He says "I know their sorrows" He tells Moses of the length and breadth, the height and depth of a love which is past all human understanding (Eph. 3:17ff).

What creature, be he angel, Seraphim and Cherubim, or men in all their contemplations, can fathom the ocean of God's

empathy. We shall see more of this when we study the great high priests, who is ours' who is not such that he cannot be touched in his heart with the feelings of our frailties and infirmities. (Heb. 4:15, 16)

So let us simply in childlike faith listen to God pouring out His heart to Israel in the prophetic promissory Scriptures. In Isaiah we hear God pouring forth in clear and unmistakable language, yea "in human tongue" his matchless concern for Israel, His church. We read in Isaiah 41:13, 14: "For I the LORD thy God will hold (strengthen) thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee. Fear not thou worm, Jacob, and ye men of Israel; I will help thee, saith the LORD and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel."

Here is condescending sympathy. Here is reassuring promise of mercies, which will redeem Israel from all her sins. Israel can now cast all her fears away. The great Redeemer has spoken. He will surely redeem Israel at the Cross of Calvary as he once brought Israel out of Egypt with His mighty arm. Hence, fear not thou worm, Jacob-Israel. I will come down from heaven at the appointed time. There I will be your Savior. I shall have Paul an erstwhile persecutor to write the faithful words in II Cor. 5:19-21:

". . . To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in God's stead be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

Here is Divine condescending sympathetic love rooted in eternal justice of God. Mercy and truth kiss each other. God is for us a righteous God in all His tender love at Calvary. God made perfect His strength and power in our weakness there. Yes, He assures Jacob, who is but as a lowly worm, crawling in the dust, saying fear not!

We shall do well to ponder these words with believing hearts.

The entire world of unbelievers also speak of the notion of "sympathy". But they think not the thought of God, but the thoughts of man. Thus did Peter when he rebuked Jesus for speaking of the necessity that He would die for them in Jerusalem. The entire world yearns for sympathy, but it is mere human empathy which motivates them! God is not in all their thoughts. They are also in this regard walking in horrible darkness and sin; they do not know God in **His** sympathy, and do not have the faintest notion of the fathomless depths of God's understanding of the objects of His sovereign love. This love makes for a divine empathy which there is none greater! We shall pursue these thoughts still a bit more in depth when we consider the great love, Jesus.

But the import of the great sympathetic love of God, which is in Christ Jesus, we will attempt to

show from the Scriptures in our next installment in **Beacon Lights**. In the meanwhile I ask the thoughtful reader to reflect on such propositions as:

1. That the Biblical concept of the sympathetic-empathetic love is a most spiritual one. The natural man does not understand this great eternal loving attitude of God. He rather dreams and talks about a love of God apart from Christ, for all men, His is the notion of FATHERHOOD of God for all men, which is, of course, nothing but **humanism.**

2. That implied in God's everlasting, unchangeable sympathy is the truth of God's eternal election. God will never and has never cast away His people whom He foreknew (Rom. 11:2). Such was the assuring word of Samuel to Israel of old (I Sam. 12:20). And God Himself assures Elijah in Israel's darkest hour of His elective faithfulness and pity for those who fear Him (I Kings 19:18; Rom. 11:4).

Till next time then.

Dear Mr. Engelsma From a Young Adult

by Mr. D. Engelsma

"I am a young person and my parents don't want me to date any person who is not a member of the Protestant Reformed Church. I will obey my parents who I know want the best for me. There is in Scripture, however, the verse that says to marry in the Lord. (I Cor. 7:39). Isn't it alright then to date in the Lord, even though the person may not be from the Protestant Reformed Churches?"

We can be thankful for parents such as yours, who are deeply concerned about the spiritual welfare of their sons and daughters. Godly parents know the importance of acquiring a life's mate with whom there is agreement on the fundamental truths of God's Word. Because these truths, these principles, are the foundation on which we live and establish our homes, harmony in this sphere is of the highest priority. "Can two walk together except they be agreed?" (Amos 3:3) Couples take strife and pain into their marriage if in their courtship they refuse to reckon with this premise.

It is a priceless gift of God's grace to us, that we as churches hold fast to the inspired Word of God, "which is profitable for sound doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness," (II Tim. 3:16) Let

us humbly thank Him daily for this inheritance.

All the members of our churches experience God's covenant faithfulness when our youth marry and remain with the church. And now I caution you especially as a young person, never give ear to the philosophy of the deceivers who advocate that membership in the church of your fancy is pleasing to God.

Now your question - "Isn't it alright to date in the Lord, even though the person may not be from the Protestant Reformed Churches?" Yes, I believe one can date in the Lord someone from another denomination. This is possible when a young man or woman has in mind and heart to seek a godly mate, one who aspires to the same goals and principles. It seems to me our own churches should be the prime territory to "spy out" as the saying goes.

Although I do not advise anyone to disobey his or her parents in these matters, yet personally I believe one may date someone, and that very discreetly, from another denomination. When so dating you must, and I repeat you must, with unflinching determination have in mind not to leave our churches for a husband or a wife.

Consequently your date should soon be informed just why your church relationship is so important to you, and that for the Biblical truths she maintains. This means, of course, that you yourself understand and are knowledgeable concerning the doctrines of our Protestant Reformed Churches. For how can we teach others, if we are not able to clearly define what we believe and love?

I experienced this while serving as elder in Hope Protestant Reformed Church. A young man (formerly a Baptist) came to us to make confession of faith with our congregation. He was planning to marry the daughter of a fellow elder. When being questioned by the elders, he voluntarily stated that he would join our churches even if for some reason their marriage plans were canceled. This young lady and her parents also, had done their "homework" well.

It is most unlikely that all courtships end as conciliatory as this, but certainly you may and must pray for a similar blessing. Of course if your friend is continually antagonistic to your presentation, you are morally obligated to end this relationship, in order to have a clear conscience as regards your profession of faith.

In conclusion, and to all our young people, may I take this opportunity to say, that to "marry in the Lord" does not simply mean to marry someone who attends a church. It means much more. It is to marry a person who loves God and desires to worship Him in spirit and in truth, and in a church that holds to His revealed Word.

So, you have my answer to your question. I pray that you may agree with my opinion. Our young people occupy a most important place in our churches, for they are our future strength. They must presently take our place as fathers

and mothers, elders and deacons. So prepare yourselves, by God's grace, even with marriages in the Lord, for the glorious task that awaits you.

JUDGING ONE ANOTHER IN LOVE

by Rev. R. Van Overloop

Wrong and sinful judging of one another can cause serious harm, not only to the individual Christian, but also the Body of Christ. The Pharisee of Jesus' day is an example of how not to judge. He had a very high regard for himself and utter contempt for those who did not belong to his sect. He took it upon himself to pass censorious and unjust judgment upon the motes of others, while blind to his own glaring faults (Matt. 7:1-5).

Right and loving judging of one another can accomplish an immense amount of good in the Church. In contrast to the Pharisee, the disciple of Christ is to conduct himself in such a way that he frequently judges himself, while refusing to invade the office of God where others are concerned.

I. We may judge.
   A. Man makes judgments by the very fact that he is created a moral being. The capacity of judging, that is, of forming an estimate and opinion, is one of the faculties God created in man.
   B. Further, as Christians, we are commanded to judge. "Judge righteous judgment" (John 7:24; also look up I Cor. 10:15; 11:13). The commands to believe the truth and to do the right implies the making of judgments. If we do not judge between what is true and false and between what is right and wrong, how can we hold to the one and reject the other? We are told to have our "senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Hebrews 5:14). We are to judge what are the "unfruitful works of darkness" so that we do not have fellowship with them (Ephesians 5:11).
   C. There are certain kinds of judging which are required in God's Word.
      1. First, there is "ecclesiastical judgment", which belongs to the elders and ministers of the local church of Christ (John 20:23). They are called to judge when they admonish individual believers for their sins. Also, they judge when they determine the credibility of the profession of one making confession of their faith.
      2. Also there is "civil judgment" which is performed by the government when it is called to punish those who do evil and reward those who do well (I Peter 2:14).
      3. And God's Word requires (and therefore makes legitimate) judgments by the individual Christian. We, in a godly manner and out of Christian love, are called to show a fellow-saint their sins if they walk without sorrow and repentance (Matthew 18:15).

II. There are many ways in which judging is unlawful and improper.

A. The judging which God gives to the church office-bearers and to the civil government is outside the prerogative of the individual. It is assuming an authority over others, which we would not allow them to have over us. Rather than judging one another in a critical manner, we are admonished that "each esteem other better than themselves" (Phil. 2:3) and to be "subject one to another and be clothed with humility" (I Peter 5:5). Thus the Bible tells us that there are spheres of life which are not set before us for judgment, and then we are told "to do your own business" (I Thess. 4:11).

B. We may never judge presumptuously, that is, acting upon mere suspicions and unconfirmed rumors. Presumptuous judging is also judging the motives of another, for they are known only to the Omniscient One. Besides, each saint is a servant of the Master, so each may be rightly asked, "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth" (Rom. 14:4).

C. We also may not judge hypocritically. In Matthew 7:1-5 Jesus speaks about the beam and mote. Often we are quick to detect the minor faults of others while blind to or (worse) unconcerned about our own more serious faults. To judge another in such a manner is to condemn ourselves (Romans 2:1).

D. And we may not judge rashly or in haste. The sting of the proverb often pricks us: "He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him" (Prov. 18:13). Often, if we are able to hold our tongue for a while, the passing of some time brings to light surrounding circumstances which give reason to approve or to pity rather than to condemn.

E. It is also wrong for us to judge a brother about things concerning which the Scriptures say nothing. These matters are called "things indifferent". If we condemn anyone on matters such as "meat and drink", then we sinfully put them and ourselves in bondage (Romans 14; Colossians 2:20, 23).

III. How ought we to judge one another? Always with love.

The apostle Paul admonishes us to speak the truth in love (Eph. 4:15). If you cannot speak the truth in love, then keep your murderous mouth shut!

We can learn how to judge one another from I Corinthians 13. Love means that we suffer long (vs. 4a) with their faults and injuries, without being quick to retaliate with our tongues. Love is not discourteous, that is, behaving itself unseemly, treating a fellow-saint carelessly (vs. 5a). Very importantly, love thinketh no evil (vs. 5b). This means that we are not suspicious about our fellow-saints motives and actions. And it means that even when evil has been done against us, we do not hold it against them but forgive them readily. Further, love does not rejoice in iniquity (vs. 6a). Love is not blind to sin, for it grieves in a brother's sin (Matthew 18). Love does not allow us to judge to be a good Christian someone who holds fundamental error or who is thoroughly worldly in their walk. We may not call evil good. However, love does not allow us to take secret delight in another's sin, but calls us to cover it up as

much as we can (I Peter 4:8). And love believes the best of everyone as much as it possibly can (vs. 7).

Often we need not judge one another as often as we think we do. The principle of Romans 14 frees us from judging the weaker brother, for he is "another man's servant" and it is "to his own master" that "he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand." (verse 4).

Never are we permitted to judge others without sympathetic understanding, lest we fall into the common trap of making a mountain out of a molehill.

Why does love require us to judge one another in this way? Because this is the nature of God's love for me. In God love always behaves this way.

May God graciously deliver us from unlawful judging. And may He give us the wisdom to know when we have the right to judge, and then the love to judge rightly.

WHAT'S HAPPENED

by Lora Bouwkamp

SCHOOLS

Hope School, Grand Rapids, MI held their Family Fun Night April 28. They also held their Kindergarten Program on May 2.

Covenant Christian High Sophomore Orientation was scheduled for May 8. Covenant High held their Band and Choir Program on April 15.

Heritage Christian School held their Family Fun Night May 11.

SOUTH HOLLAND

The Young People's Society held a ski trip February 10.

The membership papers of Joel Engelsma were transferred to our Southeast Church, Grand Rapids.

The sacrament of baptism was administered to Joy Elizabeth, daughter of Phil and Nancy Van Baren.

Bill and Thres Lenting celebrated their golden anniversary March 9.

March 18 was the 65th wedding anniversary of Bert and Evelyn Maatman.

The consistory received the membership papers of Doug Bleyenberg from Doon, Iowa.

Earl and Gloria Kamps rejoice in the birth of their daughter, Jessica Marie.

Sympathy was extended to Sadie Buiter, Art and Alice Zandstra, Hank and Hilda Zandstra, John and Anna

Zandstra and their families in the death of their sister, Mrs. Jenny Mesman.

Mike and Char Van Baren rejoice in the birth of a son, Michael Charles.

Bob and Linda Lenting rejoice in the birth of Erika Joy.

A Resurrection Sunday Singspiration was held April 8 at the church.

LYNDEN

March 30 was the date for Covenant's annual spring school program.

The Young People sponsored a congregational night April 6, full of volleyball, basketball, and games for young and old.

The baptism of Melissa Renae, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Tolsma was held April 1.

Mrs. Marcia Molenkamp and Mr. Len Howeling made confession of faith April 8.

The church choir presented a program April 11.

Mr. Len Howeling and Miss Karla Vander Meulen were united in marriage April 27.

Marvin and Marsha Molenkamp were blessed with the birth of a daughter, Amanda Kathleen.

HULL

Mr. and Mrs. Daryl Warntjes became the parents of a son, William John.

Brian Driesen made public confession of faith April 1.

Mr. and Mrs. Brian Gritter were blessed with the birth of a daughter, Brittany Dawn.

Mr. Ralph Brummel passed away March 28.

Mr. and Mrs. Frank Vogel celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary.

COVENANT, N.J.

Sympathy is extended to Steve and Bev Hanko in the death of Bev's grandmother.

Membership was granted to Ruth and Linda Callender, and the confession of faith of Janine Wiseman. They are from Ireland.

SOUTHWEST

Mrs. H. Schipper celebrated her 82nd birthday, March 10.

Mrs. A. Deppe celebrated her 84th birthday, March 18.

The Resurrection Sunday Singspiration was held March 18 sponsored by the Federation Board.

Mrs. H. Veldman celebrated her 81st birthday, March 30.

FIRST, Grand Rapids

Christian sympathy was extended to Mrs. and Mrs. Gary Bol in the death of his brother Jack.

Mr. Tom Newhof, Sr. celebrated his 84th birthday February 26.

Mr. Jim Swart presented a slide travelogue on Britain April 27.

Mr. and Mrs. Charles Pastoor mourn the death of their daughter, Carol, March 14.

The membership papers of Mr. and Mrs. Ken Vink, and Karen, Phil, and Dale were transferred to our Grandville PRC.

Mrs. Bruce (Newhof) Miedema's membership papers were transferred to our Hudsonville PRC.

Mr. and Mrs. Ted Looyenga mourn the death of their granddaughter, Katie Brummel.

Christian condolences to Mrs. Dora Vanden Berg in the death of her sister.

Miss Jennie Karsies celebrated her 91st birthday April 6.

The papers of Mr. and Mrs. Larry Doezema and Eric and Tyler were received from Lowell CRC.

Mrs. Jessie Rietema celebrated her 85th birthday March 23.

IMMANUEL, Edmonton

The sacrament of holy baptism was administered to the infant daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Tim Zylstra.

LOVELAND, Colorado

The membership papers of Mike Potjer have been transferred to Faith PRC.

Miss Teresa Brands made public confession of faith March 18.

The choir presented their Easter program April 15.

Mr. Marty Straayer celebrated his birthday April 10.

Graduations exercises were held May 25 for Loveland PRC School.

The Ladies Circle hosted a Pancake Breakfast June 9.

SOUTHEAST, Grand Rapids

Tom and Amy (Triezenberg) Flikkema were united in marriage March 23.

The baptismal papers of Jim Koop were received from Hudsonville PRC.

Christian sympathy is extended to Mr. and Mrs. Dewey Lont in the death of his brother, Bert.

Gary and Karen Vander Schaaf rejoice in the birth of a son, Glen Davis.

Doug and Beth Mingerink were blessed in the birth of a son, Scott David.

We extend our Christian sympathy to Mrs. Hattie Wustman in the death of her brother Henry Kooienga.

The sacrament of baptism was administered to Scott David Mingerink, son of Doug and Beth, and to Glen Davis VanDer Schaaf, son of Gary and Karen.

Mr. and Mrs. Richard Critchlow give thanks to God for the birth of Curtis Jared born April 10.

We extend our condolences to the Doug Mingerink family in the death of Doug's grandfather, Albert Miedema.

The consistory received the papers of Mr. and Mrs. James Ten Elshof from the Christian Reformation Church. Received from Faith PRC were the papers of Mr. and Mrs. David Korhorn with Keith and Kyle.

The confession of faith of Kathy Pipe was May 20.

HOPE, Redlands

Sarah Hoving, Kelly Mantel, Rick Gritters, and Jared Huisken made public confession of faith March 11.

Mrs. Sue Gaastra celebrated her 88th birthday, March 7.

The membership papers of Sara Hoving were received from our Southwest PRC.

Mrs. Mary DeVries celebrated her 75th birthday March 23.

Sympathy is extended to Shari Besselson in the death of her niece, Renae Noorman from our Faith PRC.

We extend our Christian sympathy to Jim Bleyenberg and family in the death of Gloria's father, Ralph Brummel.

Mrs. Mary De Vries celebrated her 75th birthday.

Mrs. Gretine Van Uffelen celebrated her 90th birthday April 13.

HOPE, Walker, MI

The baptism of Seth Allen, son of Mr. and Mrs. Michael Engelsma and Gary Edwards, son of Mrs. and Mrs. Gary Nienhuis, took place March 11.

The membership papers of Bill Smeda were received from Jenison 12th Ave. CRC.

Sympathy is extended to Mr. and Mrs. M. Veenstra, Hazel Besselsen, Sara, Shari, and Sharlene, and Sandy and Leo De Vries, in the death of Renae Noorman.

HUDSONVILLE, MI

The sacrament of baptism was administered February 18 to Eric David, son of Mr. and Mrs. Dave Miedema, for Andrew Lee, son of Mr. and Mrs. Tom Verstrate, and for Keith Alan, son of Mr. and Mrs. Mike Van Overloop.

Mrs. Al Garvelink celebrated her 82nd birthday April 14.

Mr. and Mrs. Gerrit Lubbers celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary April 10.

Mr. and Mrs. Art Bykerk mourn the death of Arlene's father.

Elder Bernie Bruining and family mourn the death of his father.

Mr. and Mrs. Donald Dykstra celebrated their 66th wedding anniversary, and Mr. Dykstra's 90th birthday in April.

Mr. and Mrs. Dan Kerkstra rejoice in the birth of a daughter, Chelsea Jean, April 30 and baptism was celebrated June 3.

The membership papers of Mr. Dave Holstege were sent to our Byron PRC.

Brad Brower, Eric Dykstra, and Brad Kuiper made public confession of faith June 10.

Rev. C. Hanko celebrated his 82nd birthday May 19.

Heritage Christian School held graduation ceremonies June 5 with Rev. Van Baren as speaker.

Rev. Slopsema was the speaker at graduation for Hope Christian School, June 6.

Adams St. School held their graduation June 7.

Prof. D.Engelsma was the speaker of the commencement exercises of Covenant Christian High School June 8.

DOON, Iowa

Baptism was administered to Courtney Jae, daughter of Rev. and Mrs. Dykstra.

Mr. and Mrs. E. H. Van Egdom were blessed with the birth of a daughter, Breanna Jean.

The Choral Program was held March 4.

Cheryl Blankespoor and Paul De Roon were united in marriage March 9.

Baptism was administered March 25 for Brittany Jo, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. J. Teunissen.

BYRON CENTER

We express our sympathy to Cal and Marguerite Miersma in the death of her father.

Scott Miedema and Jodi Gray were united in marriage June 1 and Jodi made confession of faith May 20.

Congratulations to Walter and Harriet De Lange who celebrated their 61st wedding anniversary and to Harriet on her 84th birthday May 22.

Mr. and Mrs. Jeff Berens (Betty Zandstra) were united in marriage

May 11.

Congratulations to Tony and Michelle Pomales on the birth of a baby girl Arielle Michelle.

The consistory received the membership papers of Mr. and Mrs. Harry (Sue) Rutgers Sr. from Southwest PRC.

The sacrament of baptism was administered April 29 to Nicholas Lee, son of Ken and Machele Elzinga.

The Lord took Mrs. Sarah Key to glory April 26.

The consistory received the membership papers of Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Bush and daughter, Kimberly, from Wyoming CRC.

A hayride was held April 27 at the home of Bruce and Deb Lubbers.

Dan and Rose Bush were blessed with the birth of a son, Aaron Michael, April 9.

We extend our sympathy to Larry and Kathy Looyenga and Bryan Van Baren whose niece and cousin, the infant daughter of Joe and Mary Brummel was taken to glory.

Happy birthday to Mr. Walt De Lange on April 9.

We extend our sympathy to Jay Holstege, Randy and Tracy, in the death of their father-in-law and grandfather.

BETHEL, Illinois

The sacrament of baptism was administered to Anna Michelle, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Tom Hirschler.

Mr. and Mrs. Nathan Lubbers rejoice in the birth of a son Marshal Reid March 26.

The sacrament of baptism was administered to Joel David, son of Mr. and Mrs. David Benson.

We grieve with Mr. and Mrs. Roger Key in the death of his sister-in-law.

"This is my absolute opinion: he that will maintain that man's free-will is able to do or work anything in spiritual cases, be they never so small, denies Christ. This I have always maintained in my writings, especially in those against Erasmus, one of the learnedest men in the whole world, and thereby will I remain, for I know it to be the truth, though all the world should be against it; yea, the decree of Divine Majesty must stand fast against the gates of hell."

—Martin Luther

"Even as a potter out of his clay makes a pot or vessel, as he wills, so it is for our free-will, to suffer and not to work. It stands not in our strength; for we are not able to do anything that is good in divine matters."

—Martin Luther

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