BEACON LIGHTS

FOR PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH

APRIL 1991

Other "over the fence" news that has come to me is that many of you young men are beginning to realize your future roles in church leadership; some of you will certainly be elected to the offices of elders and deacons. That is an awesome responsibility . . . And I hope that you are listening when your pastors pray that God will raise up young men who aspire to the ministry. That great need is ever with us.

From "A Letter To My Grandchildren" by John Faber

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EDITOR'S NOTES

by David Harbach

Have you ever been given a job that you never did before? That is exactly what I did to Mr. J.P. de Klerk when I stated in the February Editor's Notes that he was "an architect who writes many articles in the Dutch language." Mr. de Klerk wrote me a letter telling me that he comes from Ashhurst, New Zealand and that in truth, Mr. de Klerk's son, Theo, is the architectural draftsman, who writes occasional articles in some monthly magazines. Mr. Jacobus Pieter de Klerk, the author of "Of A Different Kind," for the last forty-five years has been a journalist and author, writing thousands of articles and five books. My apologies to Mr. J.P. de Klerk for making him out to be an architect when he actually is a journalist and author. I also extend my early congratulations to him and his wife on their 25th wedding anniversary come the 27th of September.

He also writes, "Thank you for printing my short story Of A Different Kind' so well in your attractive monthly, without any typesetting error; there are not many publications in the world who do that." I appreciate that comment about the typesetting because that gives me the opportunity to thank our typesetter, Mr. Jim Van Overloop, and his very able proofreader, Mrs. Thelma Westra, for the excellent work they have given towards the typesetting of the Beacon Lights. With excellent typesetting and superb printing by Mr.

Jim Huizinga, the Beacon Lights staff looks forward to producing each issue.

At our first staff meeting in March we spent considerable time discussing possible new rubrics. In the discussion it was brought out that the primary focus of the B.L., according to our constitution, is for the spiritual edification of Protestant Reformed Youth. While the readership of the B.L. is predominantly Protestant Reformed, we are also aware that many other Reformed young people read our magazine. We also determined that many Reformed young people between the ages of eighteen and twenty eight, married and single, read our magazine. It is the consensus of the staff, therefore, to write some articles geared specifically toward this age group. We are making a strong attempt to utilize the writing talents of our readers. We, therefore, encourage participation from our readership to help make this magazine spiritually edifying to our readers.

A couple of times each year we print essays that are written by those young people that aspire to be future Protestant Reformed ministers or teachers. In this issue you will find such an essay written by Kristen Engelsma, "The Leadership Responsibility of a Teacher". The two opening sentences of Kristen's article provide the basis for leadership responsibility, "In all walks of life and occupations today, one must look to Christ as the ultimate and final example. It is after Him that one must fashion his lifestyle and behavior." Read and enjoy her writing.

Kristen is a junior high teacher at Adams Street Christian School. She taught full time as a student teacher from the beginning of the school year while finishing her college educational training. She will be writing an article in the August/September issue about her first year experiences as a teacher. If you are wondering why I have provided all this information about Kristen, it is because she is the newest member of the Beacon Lights staff. Welcome to our growing and energetic staff, Kristen.

Take note, future ministers and teachers, of the ad from the Protestant Reformed Scholarship Fund Committee. Applications can be obtained from Jim Holstege and are due by June 1, 1991. The theme for this year is, "How should the old paths spoken of in Jeremiah 6:13-17 be preached and taught?" We look forward to printing some of your articles in future issues.

Rev. Heys writes From The Pastor's Study an article on "Remembering Our Creator." Remembering what God calls us to remember is a vital part of our lives as God's young people. As you will find out from this article there are many important truths for us to remember that help us in each day of our lives as young people who work in the world or at home.

It has been awhile since you have read a letter from Gramps. Mr. Faber has an encouraging letter for you to read. Keep up the good work young people and may God continue to bless you in all your labors. And thank you Gramps for all your love shown to us throughout the years. We eagerly await your next letter.

"The Testimony of Life" and "Taking the Stand" are written by two young people from Indiana. Bruce Miedema persuaded Amy Reinbold and Dawn Glock to write

about meeting and talking to others about the grace and faith God has given us. Both Amy and Dawn wrote a brief letter to me about themselves, so that you will get to know them better. I have put parts of these letters at the beginnings of each of their articles. Thank you for your articles Amy and Dawn. We are pleased that you are willing to write for Reformed young people.

In addition, Amy writes, "I am requesting that you send me several copies of this issue of the Beacon Lights. There are some interested people here that I would like to give it to. There are also several people that I would like to send subscriptions to." I will do that Amy. And I hope others of you encourage people to read the Beacon Lights. We plan to hold a subscription drive in the near future. But don't wait. Send your subscription requests and dues to either Angie DeZwarte, 1501 Maderia SW, Grand Rapids, MI 49504, if you live in Michigan or to Pam Dykstra, 2846 Vermont, Grandville, MI 49418, if you live outside Michigan. The staff thanks you for your support and looks forward to preparing spiritually encouraging issues for you almost each month of the year.

In this issue, Prof. Hanko furthers his series on the Janssen Controversy. Prof. Hanko explains what he means by the title to this series, "To Lose The Battle And Win The War." This article and the others that will follow provide the background for the beginning of our Protestant Reformed Churches. The question of common grace can not be minimized nor sidestepped if we are to properly understand this heresy and the turmoil that it has caused and still causes in many Reformed churches today.

Thank you, Lora, for keeping us abreast of the Church News. What about some news from "overseas?" I think we are at a point in our young people's history that we also need to hear what other Reformed young people from our sister churches are doing these days. Lora would be delighted if you sent her some information. Her name and address is Lora Bouwkamp 4870 Eisenhower Dr., Hudsonville, MI 49426.

Look for Ecclesiastes Letter #11 in the next issue.

The index for 1990 is in this issue. We thank Beth Bartelds for taking the time to provide us the index. I apologize for not letting Beth know earlier that we needed an index.

In the next issue, look for several articles about how some families of our churches came to the Reformed faith. You will be amazed at the care God takes in bringing the truth of His Word to His people.

"Hope is assured living. We know in Whom we have believed, and that His promises are sure. We know that when our earthly house of this tabernacle be dissolved, that we shall have a house of God, not made with hands, but eternal in the heavens. The man that hopes in God is sure of his salvation."

Rev. G. Vos, O Taste & See, p. 150

EDITORIAL

A LETTER TO MY GRANDCHILDREN

by John M. Faber

Dear Grandchildren:

It has been quite a while since you heard from me, but since that time I have been hearing some good things about you. That pleases me to no end because I have been reading in the newspapers and seeing on the T.V. news some awful things about other young people. And because you are "young people", and meet up with like temptations as the worldly kids do, I am so grateful to learn that you live in obedience to your parents and teachers. The worldly kids obey only when it suits them, or when it "pays" but you obey because it is required of you according to Scriptural injunctions. That is quite a huge difference, for then you are living out the Fourth Commandment. I know, some of those parental rules seem so stringent; even sometimes so unnecessary. But you will learn, when you become parents, that they are good for family togetherness.

For the most part, I hear, you are also obedient to "church rule" in learning your catechism lessons. Some times you as your fathers before you, wonder what profit we will ever get out of that specific obedience. Well, they are basic in learning the doctrines of the Scriptures, the doctrines which are standard in our spiritual life; the rules of faith by which we are united to Christ; the faith by which we receive the gift of eternal life. I hope that your Pastor goes beyond that basic teaching and goes beyond it by teaching the Canons found in the back of the Psalter. Those, too, will help you to prepare for your future active church membership. They will help you be able to teach your future children in living in covenantal relationship to our God and His Son whom He has sent. I know, yes I know all this is future to you young folks, but your Gramps can look back and actually see all the benefits of such instruction.

I also hear that some of you who have younger siblings help them with their catechism lessons, taking some of the burden from your Mom's shoulders. In addition, the assigned chore in the house like, whose turn it is to "do" the dishes, and who the dusting, the show shoveling, the carrying out of the garbage, and other homey jobs which make up the activity of the average household.

Other "over the fence" news that has come to me is that many of you young men are beginning to realize your future roles in church leadership; some of you will cer-

tainly be elected to the offices of elder or deacon. That is an awesome responsibility, but you can prepare for it, you know. Keep your eyes and ears open to learn what these dedicated men are doing in your church. And, I hope that you are listening when your pastors pray that God will raise up young men who aspire to the ministry. That great need is ever with us.

Did I hear one of you girls ask, "how about us?" I know that some of you are already school teachers, and others Sunday School teachers. But do you sometimes wonder what place you have in the field of Elders and Deacons? Well, from my experience I can let you in on some secrets. Elder's wives are a great help to their husbands. They encourage in that sometimes arduous task. They let their husbands 'unload' his troubles when necessary. And their husbands know that they will not breath a word of it to anyone.

A deacon's wife can accompany him on some of his sick calls. I think that deacon's wives are especially gifted in that line. The common person in the pew does not know how much help a "helpmeet" can be! There is another aspect to the wives of ministers, elders and deacons. They can keep an orderly household, and they can see to it that their children are obedient, and keep such tasks from their husbands' busy schedule. They can be in their subservient role of tremendous help in deacon's ruling role.

If your boyfriend is attending seminary, or has intentions to do so in the future, I advise you to pay an afternoon call on your minister's wife. Let her tell you what a big job that is. Let her tell you how she keeps unwanted callers from the house; and keeps silly and needless phone calls from his study.

Now if you have been thinking that the boys got all the jobs in the church, I hope that it has become clear to you that for each of those boys there is a corresponding number of girls who have their work cut out for them. So you see that being "submissive" is definitely an activity. But I hear that many of my grandchildren have already learned from that experience. Verily, you shall reap your reward.

Love, Gramps.

"It has become almost impossible to walk the streets or to enter mixed company without hearing the sacred Name of God treated with blasphemous contempt. The novels of the day, the stage, and even the radio (and more lately television, the cinema, and the press) are terrible offenders, and without doubt this is one of the fearful sins against Himself for which God is now pouring out His judgments upon sin. Sore punishments shall be his portion, if not in this life, then most assuredly so, eternally so. in the life to come."

A. W. Pink, The Ten Commandments, p. 31

To Lose The Battle And Win The War

Chapter III
The Issues In The Battle (6)

by Prof. H. Hanko

In earlier articles, we discussed how Prof. Ralph Janssen denied the truth of the infallible inspiration of Scripture. We discovered what the effects of this denial were in his views of the Old Testament: how he maintained that the creation account of Genesis 1 & 2 were imported into the thinking of the Israelites from Babylonian mythology; how many other ideas found in the Old Testament Scriptures came from pagan religions and pagan thinking; how the miracles were not truly miracles, but were events that took place by natural causes; how some of the Old Testament writings were not a part of God's revelation in Christ, but were merely opinions expressed by the human authors; and other erroneous ideas.

Before we proceed further with our discussion of Janssen's views, it is good to pause for a bit and notice how these views are now very generally taught in the Christian Reformed Church, including Calvin College and Seminary.

We must remember that Prof. Janssen was condemned for his views and deposed from office for holding them. The Synod of the Christian Reformed Church in 1922 discussed Janssen's views and found them contrary to the clear teaching of Scripture. Now we are nearly 70 years after these events and Janssen's views are very widely accepted in the church. In fact, not only are Janssen's views generally taught, but many have gone beyond the teachings of Janssen and teach worse things than Janssen ever thought of teaching. Yet no church discipline is exercised against such teachers and preachers.

This is what I mean by the general title of these articles: "To Lose The Battle And Win the War." Janssen lost his battle in defense of his views, for he was put out of office and banished from the Seminary. But, after all, he won the war, for his views are now commonly accepted.

While it is not necessary to go into detail on how widely Janssen's views are accepted, it would be well to remind ourselves of some evidences in the Christian Reformed Church that this is indeed the case.

The doctrine of the infallible inspiration of Scripture is commonly denied in our mother church. There are many evidences

of this.

Everyone knows how the Christian Reformed Church is presently embroiled in a creation-evolution debate. Evolutionism of the most blatant form is openly taught in the halls of Calvin College.1 When it is asked how such open evolutionism can be maintained in the light of what the Bible teaches in Genesis 1 & 2, the defenders of evolutionism calmly speak of the fact that the first 11 chapters of Genesis (as well as other parts of Scripture) are nothing but myth or saga, most likely imported from pagan (particularly Babylonian) mythology.2

The miracles of Scripture are denied and, when taught in the Bible courses, are explained in terms of natural events in the creation such as earthquakes (which caused the walls of Jericho to fall) and strong winds (which dried the waters of the Red Sea).

In defense of opening the offices in the church of Christ to women, the texts of Scripture which clearly oppose this notion are dismissed as being culturally conditioned. That is, these texts are interpreted as being the individual notions of the man who wrote the books, or are a reflection of the ideas which were generally held during the times these books were written, but are of no importance or significance to us today. One writer went so far as to say that the greatest obstacle to women's efforts to gain their rights was the Bible, and specifically the teachings of Jesus. Until such a time as the church had the courage to repudiate these teachings, women would remain a downtrodden and oppressed sex.

What is disturbing and distressing is the fact that those who teach such things are no longer being disciplined. Prof. Janssen was deposed from office for teaching these very views. That was some 70 years ago. Today those who teach identical views not only escape the discipline of the church, but are protected and encouraged by the ecclesiastical assemblies; and, those who oppose such views are criticized and ostracized.

This is strange, to say the least. How can the same church which once condemned all these views, now openly permit them to be taught? It would seem that the Christian Reformed Church ought to do one of two things. It ought either to discipline those in her fellowship who deny the basic truths of Scripture, or it ought publicly to exonerate Prof. Janssen, apologize for condemning him, retract its decisions to oppose him, and lift his deposition — even if all this must be done posthumously. Surely the church was wrong then and right now, or it was right when it deposed Janssen, but is terribly wrong now.

How is it that this strange change came about? How did it happen that Prof. Janssen could

1This is not really new. Already when I was attending Calvin in the late Forties and early Fifties, only one teacher in the science department held firmly to the Biblical truth of creation.

2See for a detailed description of this fact, my recent review of a book written by Howard Van Till, Robert Snow, John Stek and Davis Young, and entitled, Portraits of Creation: Biblical and Scientific Perspectives on the World's Formation; Volume XXIV, No. 1, pp. 65-74, Protestant Reformed Theological Journal

be put out of office for views which are openly taught and publicly accepted — even by the highest ecclesiastical assembles — in the church today?

It might perhaps be argued that this can be explained in terms of general apostasy which entered the Christian Reformed Church. Every denomination not only always faces the grave danger of apostasy, but the history of the church is a history of gradual decline. No denomination is exempt from this. Whether in Reformed or Presbyterian churches, denominations who once stood firmly for the truth, in time drifted away and went down the perilous road of false doctrine.

Such an explanation would undoubtedly be correct. It is exactly for this reason that the church of Christ must constantly be reforming itself. The old adage, A Reformed Church is a Reforming Church, always holds true. And sometimes reformation must take place by separation. The faithful in a church which has begun to walk the road of apostasy must leave to reestablish the church of Christ in purity of doctrine and life.

And this is undoubtedly what is happening in the Christian Reformed Church. We need take no pleasure in this, for the churches of which we are members face constantly the same dangers. Apostasy is a constant threat, and vigilance is required of those who wish to be faithful.

But this explanation is not the whole explanation. There is an historical reason why Janssen's views, while once condemned, nevertheless, resurfaced in the church.

What is this historical reason?

The answer is that, bound up with Janssen's views on Scripture were his views on common grace. And the interesting fact is that, while Janssen appealed to common grace in support of his position, and while his views of Scripture were condemned, he was never condemned for teaching common grace.

Immediately after the Janssen controversy, the Christian Reformed Church was once again in turmoil over the question of common grace. This turmoil reached its conclusion just two years later when the Christian Reformed Church officially accepted the heresy of common grace and deposed three ministers who denied common grace. These three ministers were Revs. Herman Hoeksema, George Ophoff, and Henry Danhof. And this was the beginning of the Protestant Reformed Churches.

To this important question of common grace and its relation to Janssen's teachings we now turn.

"Whenever then pure doctrine is offered to us, let us know that the teachers who speak and instruct us by their ministrations are, as is were, the hand of God, who sets food before us, as the head of a family is wont to do to his children. And certainly since the Lord cares for our bodies, we must also know that our souls are not neglected by Him: and further since the earth produces not corn and other things of itself but God's blessing is the source or all fruitfulness and abundance, is not His Word a much more precious food?"

Calvin's Commentary, Minor Prophets II, page 377

THE TESTIMONY OF LIFE

by Amy Reinbold

My family has been involved with the Protestant Reformed Churches for just over three years. Prior to that we were Arminian and very involved with Charismatic and Pentecostal churches. God graciously revealed His truth to us through the diligent study of my mother who had come across a newsletter that dealt with the similarities of the church today and Rome. This greatly disturbed her, and she began to read everything she could get her hands on about the Reformation. So of course her study included Martin Luther and John Calvin. In the end she got a hold of something by Prof. Engelsma, and she called him. We have been in the PR churches ever since.

There is currently some work going on here in Fort Wayne. We have Bible studies here twice a month, and Sunday services twice a month. Ministers from South Holland, Peace and Bethel conduct them. We have a very small group, but we are growing spiritually and there has also been a certain amount of numerical growth. We pray that the Lord will continue to bless this work.

What is a testimony? The popular definition of a testimony is: an open or public declaration of one's faith or conversion. Sometimes a testimony is the story of some difficult experience or recurring problem that has been overcome, and that has resulted in a lesson learned or a strengthening of faith. Whatever the definition, the giving of testimonies has become a very popular, widespread practice in the church world today.

Do you have a testimony? You may not think so because most of you have grown up in the faith, and have never known anything else. But let's take a closer look at what a testimony is. The Random House College Dictionary defines a testimony as evidence in support of a fact or statement. A testimony, therefore, testifies of something. In that case, our words, our actions, indeed, our entire lives are a testimony.

Everyone has a testimony. Each life on this earth testifies of something. The question then becomes: of what does your life testify?!! The life of the atheist makes a clear statement of hatred and enmity against God. The life of the Arminian proudly acclaims himself against the unchangeable justice and sovereignty of the Almighty. There are others who simply believe that God exists. Their testimony bespeaks a god who is around when they need him, but they are self-satisfied to live the rest of their lives totally apart from him. All of these are

testimonies, but they are the wrong kind of testimonies.

What is a right kind of testimony? A good testimony?

What does the Bible say on the subject of testimonies?

Scripture speaks of testimony in the sense of a witness or bearing witness. In the Old Testament God's law is frequently called His testimony (Psalm 119:22, 24, 59, 79) because it is His affirmation concerning His nature, attributes, and subsequent demands. In the New Testament the idea of giving a testimony or testifying referred to the activity of affirming that one has seen or heard or experienced something, or that he knows something because he was taught by divine revelation. The apostles are said to testify or bear witness of what they saw and heard of the life of Jesus which proved that He was the Messiah (Acts 2:40; 8:25; 18:5; 20:21, 24; 28:23).

Therefore, we see that a testimony, in the Biblical sense, does not refer to what I have done or what has happened in my life, but refers to what God has done. In this sense the Scriptures call every believer to bear witness. We all have a testimony, if it is only the fact that our life is a manifestation of what we believe.

When the world looks at us can they see the fruit that our lives should be producing (Galatians 5:22, 23)? What is our testimony? Do they see love and joy, or do they miss that because they can not see past gossip and bitterness? Do they see peace and patience, or is that obscured by our discontent and our eagerness to get on with our own agenda of earning money and having fun? Can they discern gentleness, goodness, meekness, and temperance in us, or are these qualities hidden beneath selfishness, pride, and greed? Do they see our faith? Most importantly, do they see God in us? They should because the true church is a reflection of Him.

Exodus 20:7 says, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain." Every professing child of God has taken on the name of the Lord: CHRISTian. We bear His name, and we are representatives of Him. We are not to bear it falsely. The testimonies of our lives will do one of two things. They will either bear witness of Him, or they will deny Him before men. We do not even have to open our mouths to deny Christ. We can also deny Him with our actions. In fact, our actions carry much more weight than our words. There is an old saying - Your actions speak so loudly that I can't hear what you say. This is very true. Matthew 10:30 says, "But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven." Think about that!!! Christ will deny those who deny Him!

Fellow young people, let us examine our lives.

Are we living according to God's law? If not, we need to ask ourselves why not. You see, many people view Christianity as a long list of rules and regulations that no one can live up to. But that is not what Christianity is. Being a born again Christian is simply love for the faith in God. He tells us, though, in John 14:15 that if we love Him we will keep His commandments.

The fruit of our lives that the rest of the world sees, our testimony, is simply a result of our love and gratitude toward Him. God does require that we keep His

commandments, but our obedience involves more than duty. If we love God it becomes the earnest desire of our grateful hearts to obey Him and keep His statutes. They become a part of us. He writes them on the tables of our hearts. Then we can say with the Psalmist in Psalm 119:129, "Thy testimonies are wonderful: therefore doth my soul keep them." And in Psalm 119:143, 144, ". . . yet they commandments are my delights. The righteousness of thy testimonies is everlasting: give me understanding and I shall live."

Your personal testimony is something that you give wherever you go and whether you want to or not.

When the world is watching us (and you can be assured that they ARE watching us) they can look into the mirrors of our lives and see exactly what we reflect. We need to consider our actions. Do the things that we do and say point to Him? Or do we carry His name lightly?

We would all do well to remember Matthew 5:16. "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven." May God grant us all the strength and the desire to be a testimony unto His glory. Amen.

THE LEADERSHIP RESPONSIBILITIES OF A TEACHER

by Kristen Engelsma

In all walks of life and occupations today, one must look to Christ as the ultimate and final example. It is after Him that one must fashion his lifestyle and behavior. However, although this imitating of Christ is crucial for all persons in all areas of life, it is especially important for the teacher to follow Christ's example when examining his leadership responsibilities. For it is the teacher and his leadership that positively or negatively influence the young, naive children who are in such desperate need of proper guidance. A correct assumption of leadership responsibilities by a teacher will ultimately lead to a positive growth and learning by his students. The truths that lead to this correct assumption of responsibility can be discovered only by using Christ as an example.

In Proverbs 3:1-4 God points out to believers how to win prosperity, favor and a good name for many years. A Christian is able to accomplish this by keeping the commandments of God and by never allowing love and faithfulness to leave him. A teacher must take these words of guidance seriously. For during His stay on earth, Christ continually demonstrated His love for His people. In

fact, Christ loved His people so much that He died on the cross for them. He remained faithful to His people to the very end even unto death. As a teacher one must also always allow his love for his students to be known along with a type of faithfulness—a dedicated, unrelinquishing faithfulness to teach to the best of his ability. A caring teacher creates an atmosphere of genuine concern among his students. In turn the students will pick up on this and, on the whole, attempt to do their best in the classroom.

However, along with this love and faithfulness, Christ was also inherently just. His love for His people never got in the way of His teaching and illustrating the correct walk of life. He daily pointed out the consequences of rejecting God and living a life of sin. He showed those who followed Him the errors of such things as materialism to the extent of instructing a young rich ruler to sell all he had and follow Christ (Luke 18:22). Christ was extremely and perfectly honest about how to follow Him and what had to be done. Furthermore, Christ followed through with the instructions and consequences When He said He would die and rise again in three days, one could depend on Him doing it. When He spoke of what had to be done in order to gain acceptance into heaven, one could depend on this being the case. So also must it be with the teacher of today. Just as a Church fails and becomes useless without discipline and justness, so shall a classroom. Without proper discipline being continuously carried on as previously warned, the students will rule the classroom. The teacher will have failed and no learning can possibly be carried out. A structured set of disciplinary rules are essential for an effectively run classroom or chaos shall reign. As Christ explains the process of excommunication (Matthew 18:15ff), so must the teacher have a structured set of rules that are explained immediately to the students which, when infringed upon, are met with the promised disciplinary actions. This promotes order in the class. The students will follow the rules set by the teacher because they comprehend what will happen should they do otherwise. Because of their depraved human nature, many students will do exactly what they have explicitly been told not to do simply because they know they can get away with it if the teacher does not follow through with discipline.

Christ took His leadership responsibilities very seriously. He realized how much depended solely on Him as the Son of God. Every day thousands of people listened carefully to His every word and accepted His words as truth. He never spoke unthinkingly or rashly because of this. So also must a teacher weigh his words and take his leadership responsibilities. As a teacher, one influences young children daily, and should this be done erroneously, the teacher shall answer for it on the final judgment day.

"Suffer little children to come unto me," Jesus said to his disciples in Luke 18:16. How can this be possible unless there is proper instruction and leadership responsibility by those teaching the children? Teachers have a grave responsibility that must be taken seriously or they will have to answer for it before God.

TAKING THE STAND

by Dawn Glock

My name is Dawn Glock. I'm 22 years old. I live with my family in Churubusco, IN. I have been a believer since I was six years old, and as I've grown in the faith, I can see how God has directed my life and kept me close to Him since that time. It wasn't until the last two years, however, that He has shown me, through the witness of Amy Reinbold and her family, from the PRC of South Holland, IL, the truth of His Word. That He has chosen me to be an heir to His kingdom. The fact that He had planned my life made the acceptance of the disease I had much easier. His grace overwhelms me.

"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?" Romans 10:13-14

When called upon to testify as a witness in the courtroom, the duty that befalls you is to proclaim the knowledge you have, either for or against the person for whom the testimony is given. In the case of the criminal, the hope is that your word will be adequate enough to convict: for the innocent, the link to freedom. One person's testimony can sometimes mean the difference between life and death. So too, God uses our testimony to share the difference between spiritual life and death.

We as Christians have been called to salvation and are the chosen children of God. This calling ensures us of our heavenly rewards and the miracle of eternal life. However, it also requires of us the responsibility to obey God's decrees. This responsibility includes sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ. ("Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:" Matthew 28:19) This is not something God has told us we may do if we feel like it. It is a responsibility that is expected.

We should share the Good News of Jesus Christ. It is sometimes very difficult to discuss what God has taught us without feeling "pushy". The world around us places Christianity in the "religious" category, to which belong the weak in spirit and money-hungry evangelists. To have an opportunity to share, the world needs to see a living example of what Christianity really is. They need to be shown peace in a world where there is no peace, contentment in

a world of discontent, joy in the midst of sorrow, and love in a world full of hatred. These things can only come from God.

I am amazed at the number of times God has created a situation for me to share the Grace of our Heavenly Father over the past two years. I was attending Morehead State University in Kentucky, working full-time as the office manager in a jewelry store, and very involved with a group of musicians that traveled to churches throughout the eastern half of the state ministering to the youth groups in the area. I had my life planned, and everything was going great - right on schedule - to my way of thinking. I was wrong.

In October of 1988, I was diagnosed as having Polymiositis, a neuromuscular disease I had had very lightly as a sophomore in high school. I wasn't told it could return, so you can imagine how shocked I was. As the disease worsened, I became unable to get up and down, raise my arms, at times, swallow. I even got to the point where my lungs would barely work when I was lying down. There were a couple of nights that I didn't know if I would live until morning. I had to have total care.

You might, at this point be thinking, "What a terrible thing to happen to a young girl in the prime of her life!" "Why?" "It's not fair!" Those are just a few of the thoughts that crossed my mind. There was nothing I could do physically, so I started immersing myself in the Word of God. As I did, a peace came over me that can only come from God Himself. I still had times when in my humanness I couldn't understand why this was happening to me, but in my spirit, I knew God was in control, and that "we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." Romans 8:28. That kept me going and I was content in letting God work His plan for my life.

The fact that I was not bitter and was content in Christ, caused people to ask questions. They didn't understand how I could deal with my disease that had "stolen" my life. This gave me the opportunity to share God's love and that His grace is sufficient for me.

Even now, as my disease is in remission and I continually regain my strength, I can say that God's grace has sustained me, for there is no earthly way possible that I could have faced this without Him.

Yes, mine is an extreme case. But don't think people aren't watching your actions and your reactions to little situations in your every day life. Presenting yourself as the image of Christ, and letting the fruits of the Spirit show forth may afford you the opportunity to be on the witness stand testifying to the everlasting life in Jesus Christ.

"The trouble with the professing church is not primarily in its practice, but in its theory. Christians do not know, and many do not even care to know, the doctrines of Scripture. Doctrine is intellectual and Christians are generally anti-intellectual. Doctrine is ivory tower philosophy, and they scorn ivory towers. The ivory tower, however, is the control tower of a civilization. . . . It is the first duty of the Christian to understand correct theory - correct doctrine - and thereby implement correct practice."

- John W. Robbins

From The Pastor's Study

REMEMBERING OUR CREATOR

by Rev. John A. Heys

What you young people should remember is not simply what wise king Solomon wrote. We should indeed heed what wise people say and advise us to do. However the awesome truth and extremely important calling that we have is that which our all-wise and sovereign God, Who moved Solomon to write what he did in the book of Ecclesiastes, demands. Surely this is true as far as the first verse in Ecclesiastes 12 is concerned, where we read: "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the days draw nigh when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them."

The point , young people, is that you must remember what God calls you to remember. The truth is here that there is that which you must have in mind every step of your earthly way. Note that our God through Solomon tells you to "Remember now." Get that! You must remember now in "the days of thy youth." You must remember that God is your creator. This means that every work which you perform, every act that you commit, every day but also every minute in every day, you must set forth the truth that God created you, and that He did so in order that you might serve Him with heart, mind, soul and strength.

Remember then also that it is not simply Solomon who telis you this. It is God Who sets this truth before you and tells you that you may not do anything that denies Him as your creator.

That is extremely hard for us. For the unbelievers it is impossible. It is very, very hard also for us who are much older than you are. Every rational, moral creature has that calling. And to remind us God declares to us through Solomon that it is sin when we do anything without remembering Him as our God and creator.

What we need to remember then is also that Satan, who is so very, very clever and wise in worldly, sinful things, is very busy trying to get us to forget God and our calling to remember and serve Him. Especially in the days of our youth is this true. And our God through Solomon presents this calling to you because Satan is so clever and wise in a worldly sense that temptations are so very intense in the days of our youth,

and he so often and repeatedly gets us to walk in sin. He gets us where it is so hard for us to turn away and to walk in God's law. Let us put it this way: Satan in the days of our youth gets us to walk in sins so often that also in enthusiasm we walk and make a deep rut out of which it is so hard to get out of and leave.

Take note of the fact that Solomon tells us here to remember our Creator. We must remember Him as our Savior in Christ. But the truth here is that we remember that He brought us into being for His service and glory. As your creator He is the one Whom you must serve with heart, mind, soul and strength. So often we do not remember this. We fail to remember that every heart beat comes from Him and is for our work of love for Him. We do not tell our hearts to beat. We close our eyes in sleep at night and are completely detached from thought about our hearts. Not for one minute, or for that matter one second, do we tell our hearts to continue to beat. So seldom in the day do we tell our bodies to walk in love to God. If we get into some serious trouble we may remember that our whole life is in God's hands. But it is so very important that our God through Solomon here tells us to remember Him and not forget that we owe everything to Him because he created us, brought us into being and supplies us not only with all the food and drink which we need for life. But, young people, how often today did you have in your consciousness that our God is the one Who is supplying you with the oxygen in the air which you need for life? You do, we hope and pray, thank God for food and drink, clothing and shelter, friends and education. But did you ever thank Him for every breath of life which He has placed around our earthly planet by means of that oxygen?

It is in God that we live, move and have our being. Yet we forget Him most of the time and remember Him occasionally, especially because others speak of Him and remind us. And we forget also that all things are His possessions which MUST be used to serve Him. We must also take hold of and have before our consciousness what our God told us through Paul in II Corinthians 5:10, namely, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that everyone may receive the things done in the body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."

Especially today this call in Ecclesiastes 12:1 is so important. For we live in a day and age when the world round about us has developed far more in sin than in the days of Solomon. And with the many inventions of man sin is brought so much closer to us and we are able to commit more sins with more devices and tools. We can do sins which are basically the same as committed in Solomon's day; but we can commit more of these sins in one day than they could in a week or month. And the sad thing is that even in the church world more sins are allowed and even recommended than in the days of the youth of those who are now your fathers and mothers, grandfathers and grandmothers.

Sad to say but true, I recall clearly that when I was attending our seminary there was a young man attending another seminary and was expelled because he was caught coming out of a theater

where those who did not remember their Creator were on the screen. He had been entertained and enjoyed watching worldly people breaking God's law rather than remembering Him as their Creator.

But today churches - including the one that expelled this seminary student - will list movies, plays in which sins of those who do not remember their Creator are recommended. On the screen are people imitating sins of others, or most likely even, sins that entertain the flesh of us as we are by nature. Imagine a child of God enjoying the performance of sins, delighting in seeing people forget their Creator!

Young People, if you cannot resist turning on your TV set to see sins committed, get rid of that set! Yes, on newscasts you will see sins that were committed. Scripture does that too. From Adam and Eve's sin onward we do learn in God's word but also by news report of sins that have been committed. But these movies and Hollywood companies entertain by sin. They use murder and theft, adultery and covetousness to entertain, not inform what actually did happen. They take God's name in vain, recommend and invite breaking the Sabbath, and present people who love to walk in those sins. Away from our holy and sovereign God they want to turn our thoughts. And instead of teaching us to hate sin and to flee from it, they entertain and make men enjoy sinful acts.

Therefore before you turn on your TV set remember your Creator. Remember what Jesus taught us in Matthew 22:37-40. There He said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind . . . And . . . thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto the first Jesus said. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. Our God is the one Who created us, and He is the one Who has the right to demand of us that we keep His law and hate all the sin and deviltry in this world.

Do not enjoy sin. Do not seek to see as much of it as you can so that your flesh is delighted. Do not let sinners entertain you and turn you away from our holy God and love of Him. Pray to the sovereign God that He will cause you to remember Him and to plan all your life in that which is love of Him.

Then too look for a wife or husband that will help you remember your Creator and bring up your children as those who remember Him. After marriage you will have one who will remember your Creator with you, or serve to keep you from the constant remembrance which is required. Seek one that will help you remember Him. Because our God tells us through Solomon to remember Him in the days of our youth it is so very important whom we choose to live with us in that calling.

Let it also be your guide as far as the work you want to perform. Seek not a job or occupation that will make you forget your God, or keep you from a city where there is a church that will help you remember Him. Remembering your Creator is far more important than gold and silver which you can have only for a few years, and will be taken away from you to the last penny when our Creator stops your heart from beating, and you

enter into an everlasting life with Him or away from Him in hellish woe.

And by all means remember what our Creator did for His sons and daughters. Remember the gift of His Son and the salvation which he realized for us through His Son. That we must remember every day of the life which we live here in this vale of tears and sorrows. Remember what His Son did for us and how He walked. We must walk in His footsteps and should remember every day what He did. We must follow Him, for He walked in love to His Father Who is in heaven. Remember that Christ is and must be our example as far as our walk of life here on this earth is concerned.

The question, young people, is not what your flesh wants. That question is whether you are walking in Christ's footsteps and revealing yourselves as members of His body, all working together under the will of Christ Who is the head of that body. Do only that which He did as far as God's law is concerned. He remembered His Creator in the days of His youth. Do you remember how He said to the devil when he tempted Him: "It is written: Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God." Matthew 4:4.

Remember that truth which our Savior gave you to make your answer to all that the devil through men and things strives to get you to do. And take a firm hold on what our God through Solomon brings in the last two verses of that book of Ecclesiastes, namely, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." Young People, remember that and take it with you every step of your earthly life.

ATTENTION STUDENTS!

The Protestant Reformed Scholarship Fund Committee is taking applications for scholarships to be awarded to future Protestant Reformed ministers and teachers for the 1991-92 school year. Each applicant must also submit an essay of at least three hundred words, answering this question: "In the light of Jeremiah 6:13-17, with all the false prophets around us saying, 'peace, peace when there is no peace', how should the old paths spoken of here be preached and taught?" For an application blank, contact:

Jim Holstege,
1459 Spaulding SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49546

The application, accompanied by the essay, must be returned by June 1, 1991.

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by Elizabeth Bartelds

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CHURCH NEWS

by Lora Bouwkamp

FIRST, HOLLAND, MI

Mr. and Mrs. Ryan Feenstra rejoice in the birth of a son, Brian Mark, Feb. 15.

Mr. and Mrs. Randy Boeve recently received into their home, Anmaree Joy and Nathan Jon.

The membership papers of Mrs. Heidi Doezema have been received from Randolph PRC.

The Young People's Society sponsored a Couples Dinner Feb. 21.

PEACE, LANSING, ILLINOIS

Kim Medema was blessed with the birth of a girl, Kelsey Jayne.

The baptism of Kelsey Jayne Medema and Brent Peter, son of Bart and Jan Zandstra, took place Feb. 24.

Bill and Pat De Jong were blessed with the birth of Joanna Win.

BYRON CENTER, MI

Congratulations to Mr. and Mrs. Jim Kars. Jim celebrated his 81st birthday and their 55th wedding anniversary on Feb. 14.

The baptismal papers of Miss Tracy Holstege have been sent to her home at her request.

Mr. Jason Jabaay has moved back to Redlands, CA. He had been under the care of Byron Center's consistory.

FAITH, JENISON, MI

Dec. 2 was the date of the baptism of Brett David, son of Mr. and Mrs. Gary Bylsma, and of Mark Andrew, son of Mr. and Mrs. John Van Baren Jr.

Mr. and Mrs. Mike Richards were blessed with the birth of Aubrey Renae.

The membership papers of Mr. Kimmy Kooiker have been received from Hull PRC.

Mr. and Mrs. Kurt Kaptein were blessed with the birth of Kelly Ann.

The membership papers of Gary Brummel have been received from Hull PRC. The membership papers of Kristi Brummel have been sent to Redlands PRC.

On January 27 the sacrament of baptism was administered to Elizabeth Anne, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Doug Griffioen; to Kelly Ann, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Kurt Kaptein; and to Aubrey Renae, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Mike Richards.

Papers of dismissal have been sent to Peter Bruckbauer residing in Texas at his request.

Mr. John Velthouse, grandfather of the Irv Velthouse family passed away.

Mr. Lammert Lanting, grandfather of the Andy Brummel family, the Don Offringa family, the Larry Koole family and the family of Rev. Koole, passed away.

The membership papers of Henry Westra were transferred to Southwest PRC.

We extend congratulations to Bob and Christy Buiter at the birth of Thomas Dale.

HUDSONVILLE, MI

Mr. and Mrs. Michael Zuverink give thanks to God for the birth of Andrea Ruth. The sacrament of baptism was administered Feb. 17.

Chad Brummel and Terri Koekkoek were united in marriage Feb. 22

On Feb. 24 the Lord delivered Mr. Harry Zwak to the glory he longed for. We extend our sympathy to his family.

SOUTHWEST, GRANDVILLE, MI

The membership papers of Lynnae Rottier have been received from Hillside Community CRC.

Congratulations to Mr. and Mrs. Steve Kuiper on the birth of Paula Rae.

Mrs. Annie Jansen celebrated her birthday Jan. 24.

FIRST, GRAND RAPIDS, MI

The congregation expresses her sympathy to Mrs. Henrietta Oomkes in the death of her father-in-law, Mr. John Velthouse.

Mrs. Audrey Dykstra mourns the loss of her sister.

We extend congratulations to Mrs. Minnie Pastoor and Mr. John Faber, who celebrated their 87th and 89th birthdays Feb. 14 and Feb. 16

Mr. John Van Overloop was taken to glory Feb. 13.

Mr. Charles John Doezema has resigned his membership from our congregation.

We extend our congratulations to Mr. and Mrs. Lary Doezema on the birth of Leanne Renae Feb. 16.

Mr. Tom Newhof Sr, celebrated his 85th birthday Feb. 26.

SOUTHEAST, GRAND RAPIDS, MI

The consistory has released the baptismal papers of Mr. Jim Koop at his request.

BETHEL, ILLINOIS

The congregation extends its sympathy to Mr. and Mrs. Al Stob in the death of his brother.

The sacrament of baptism was administered to Erika Noel, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Daryl Poortinga.

HOPE, REDLANDS, CA

Mrs. Hilda Meelker celebrated her 80th birthday.

On Jan. 27 the congregation heard the confession of faith and witnessed the baptism of Mr.

Wayne Baker.

Mr. and Mrs. John Jabaay celebrated their 61st anniversary.

Mrs. Jennie Jabaay celebrated her 83rd birthday Jan. 26.

Michelle Feenstra and Wayne Buiter were united in marriage Jan. 25.

Mr. and Mrs. Dick Van Uffelen celebrated their 40th anniversary.

HOPE, WALKER, MI

We extend our sympathy to the Tom Oosterhouse family in the loss of his brother.

Jon and Lisa Langerak were blessed with the birth of Jonathon, Jr.

The sacrament of baptism was administered Feb. 24 to Nicole Beth, daughter of Ken and Angela Elzinga, and to Daniel James, son of Steve and Brenda Langerak.

Mr. John Velthouse passed away at the age of 98 and Mr. L. Lanting at the age of 96. We express our sympathy to their families.

Rules for Daily Life

BEGIN THE DAY WITH GOD;
Kneel down to Him in prayer;
Lift up thy heart to His abode,
And seek His love to share.

OPEN THE BOOK OF GOD,
And read a portion there;
That it may hallow all thy thoughts,
And sweeten all thy care.

GO THROUGH THE DAY WITH GOD,
Whate'er thy work may be;
Where'er thou art - at home, abroad,
He still is near to thee.

CONVERSE IN MIND WITH GOD,
Thy spirit heavenward raise:
Acknowledge every good bestowed,
And offer grateful praise.

CONCLUDE THE DAY WITH GOD,
Thy sins to him confess;
Trust in the Lord's atoning blood,
And plead His righteousness.

LIE DOWN AT NIGHT WITH GOD,
Who gives His servants sleep;
And when thou tread'st the vale of death,
He will thee guard and keep.

CONVENTION NEWS

This year Byron Center Protestant Reformed Church is sponsoring the **1991 Young People's Convention.**

It will be held **August 5-9** at Grand Valley State University.

The topic of our convention is:
"Reformed Young People Living in the Last Times".

Rev. Van Baren will speak on
'Knowing About the End'
Rev. Bruinsma will speak on
'Living with A View to the End'
Rev. Dykstra will speak on
'Experiencing the End'

Our text is **I Thessalonians 5:8** and
Psalter #157 is our theme song.

Our discussion topics are:

a. **What are the signs of the times?**
b. **Should we influence the world in the last times?**
c. **Pre-millenialism.**