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Cover photo: Young people attending the 1995 Protestant Reformed Young Peoples’ Convention sponsored by Grandville Protestant Reformed Church at Hope College, Holland, Michigan.

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OCTOBER 1995
Learning From Our Youth

by Michael Kortering

I remember as a youth everyone seemed to have advice for me. From how to drive a car to sartorial styles, advice seemed to inundate me. I see as the editor that many have advice for our youth. This is good and biblical (Proverbs 1:8), and many trials and problems in life, caused by the ebullience of youth, could be prevented if wise advice were heeded. Yet, I do not think that learning is a one-way street, that adults can teach the youth but not vice-versa. While I spent this past week at the Young People’s Convention, I was reminded of the ancient Chinese proverb, “If a teacher you become, by your pupils you’ll be taught.” I find it ironic that our young people enthusiastically attend in large numbers a religious convention in order to be taught by people who themselves hold no religious convention. I find this dismaying, and I want to advocate that the time has come for a general, or family, Protestant Reformed Convention, one that is based both upon biblical grounds and contemporary needs.

I am aware of only three events which are perennially sponsored by our denomination. The first is the annual Young People’s Convention. The convention, although energetically attended by more than 350 persons, is generally restricted to those from ages 15 to the early 20’s. The second is the annual Young Adults’ Convention held in Loveland, Colorado. This convention is tacitly restricted to unmarried people in their 20’s or early 30’s. Because of the restrictions, it is generally attended by fewer than 50 persons. The third event is Synod. To attend Synod one must be a male of office-holding age, be in a church office, and be nominated. Synod has about 20 participants each year. Although our churches have more than 6200 members, only 770 of them (700 young people, 50 single, young adults, and 20 synodical delegates), or 12 percent, have the ability to attend a denominational activity. Clearly there is a great need for the members of our churches to be more united.

The idea of a convention stretches way back to the beginning of the Bible. The Israelites perennially held three major conventions, the Passover, Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles, when all the men of Israel would come together for the worship and praise of God. These festivals, or conventions, had three purposes. First, each festival gave a specific thanksgiving to God. The Passover was a remembrance of the angel passing over the houses of the Israelites while they were living in Egypt, Pentecost celebrated the first yield of barley, and the Feast of the Tabernacles was a reminder of the wilderness experience. Second, the festivals were an occasion for all of Israel to join together in the praise and worship of their God. Third, they were an opportunity for fellow believers to unite in spiritual fellowship, empathize with each other’s spiritual struggles, and edify each another. Although we no longer hold conventions for the same specific reasons of thanksgiving, we have not eliminated the need to worship God in unity and to strengthen each another. These are important aspects in which our youth excel, but in which the rest of the church is deficient.
A perhaps more important function that a denomination-wide convention could provide is that of mission work. Many of us are often reluctant, for various reasons, to invite our acquaintances and neighbors to church, but I think that we might be more prepared to invite them to a convention. I can think of few places better for people to hear God's Word and experience first-hand the communion of saints. I saw some of this at this year's Young People's Convention, although I wish it had been more prevalent. I think this was what the people of Houston, Texas had in mind when they held a missionary conference this spring. I heard that almost every church from the denomination was represented, and that the response was so overwhelming that people had to be turned away. There was also some response from the outside community, perhaps not as much as was hoped, but I think that this would increase yearly as the popularity of the convention increases. The congregation of Houston provides us with a stellar example of what could be a yearly event.

I think that this convention idea is not some pipe dream, but a potential reality for the coming years. I have heard that others have been considering the idea of hosting a convention next year, and I and hundreds of others support these efforts. Imagine a time and place when hundreds of God's people assemble from around the world to praise and worship Him, a time and place for renewing old friendships from throughout the years, and a time and place to make new friendships to last a lifetime. Our youth present us with over a half-century of what should be done. The first annual convention was held in Houston, Texas. Where will the second annual convention be held?

From The Editor

It is with regret that I announce that the most senior member of the staff, Bruce Miedema, has resigned. Bruce served for years as an associate editor, and we shall all miss him and his guidance. Being a father of two and an office bearer, Bruce decided that he no longer would be able to be an associate editor. Thanks for all the years of hard work, Bruce! Bruce will be replaced by Steve Spencer. Steve graduated from Hope College several years ago, and now he has returned as a professor of psychology. Hope College is renown for its psychology department, and it is truly an honor to have him on our staff. Perhaps you met Steve at the convention—Steve and his wife, Shelley, volunteered for two late-night watches at the boys' dorm. Welcome, Steve!

This edition is based mostly on the 1995 convention. Pastor Terpstra submitted a copy of his very emotional and moving speech, "Daniel's Bold Witness." Pastor Mahtani's and Calvin Kalsbeek's speeches will appear in next month's issue. Shari Faber included a day-by-day account of the convention's activities. There are also some pictures from such memorable events as registration, golfing, and fun day. I have included two of the many letters I have recently received. The first is from Joseph Osei Bonsu, from Ghana, West Africa. If you have a chance, it would be great if you could send him a brief note of greetings. The other letter I included is from Sarah Molenaar, who is 14 years old. Sarah was concerned that our rubric "Dating and Marriage" might encourage people to engage in an excessive amount of dating, especially with more than one person. After a lot of talking and writing, Sarah and I have become good friends, and I think that she has some valid points, even if you may not agree with all of them. It is not everyday that one sees this type of attitude, especially in a teenager. Thanks, Sarah! We also have an article by Jeffrey Kalsbeek about church unity, an article by Pastor Hanko, and our gem of the month by Thelma Westra. Do not forget, of course, Connie Meyer's "Little Lights." May God be with you in the coming month.
Dear Sir,

I am with much pleasure to write to you from Ghana. How are you sir? I hope by the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, you are fine as I am here.

This is my first time I am writing you. Please sir, I like you a penpal and am sure that you too like me penpal. I am a boy of 13 years of age. I attend S.D.A Church. Also, I attend school at Kwadaso. It is Kwadaso MLAJSS. And I am in JSS One. And in September I will be in JSS Two. I pray to God that He will bless you. On Saturdays I go to church with my brother call Frank Akosye. He is my only brother in the world.

Please sir, I will like you to send me and my brother Bible. My brother attend school at SDA at Kwadaso. Sir I end here, till I hear from you.

Yours Faithfully,

Joseph Osei Bonsu
Kwadaso MLAJSS
P.O. Box KW 41
Kwadaso-Kumasi
Ghana, West Africa

Dear Joseph:

Your letter was appreciated very much. It is not often that I receive a letter from Africa: in fact I think that yours was the first. I would certainly like to write to you, and I hope that others, especially those near your age, write to you as well. Your Bibles are in the mail.

May God be with you and your family.

Your Brother in the Lord,

Michael
Daniel’s Bold Witness

Rev. Charles J. Terpstra

INTRODUCTION

My dear friends in Christ, you are learning this week of convention that God wills and calls you to be courageous young people, spiritually strong and brave and confident in the face of danger. And you are learning what this means and how to be this by looking at aspects of the life of the godly man Daniel.

There are many important parallels between the life of Daniel and your own. Daniel had to live as a stranger in a strange land. As a Jewish captive in Babylon, he was a believer in a hostile environment. And he came to Babylon as a young man, so that his faith was challenged and tested at a young age. The nature of his life called for courage and he showed it.

This is the nature of your life too. You are covenant youth in the Babylon of this world; you are strangers in a strange land. You stand as the friends of God among people who are enemies of God and who hate you and are determined to destroy you. Because of this, there are countless challenges to your faith and Christian walk, so that the nature of your life and the times in which you live demand that you too be courageous. “Dare to be a Daniel” is more than a Sunday school song; it is God’s call to you. It is a motto to live by, a theme for your entire life.

Last night you learned one of the secrets of Daniel’s courage in Babylon, he was a man of prayer. Pastor Mahtani showed us how prayer was such an important part of Daniel’s life and how in this way he gained strength to stand strong and firm in the midst of his testings. From that you learned what you must be doing if you are to become strong and remain brave in this life of constant testings. You must stay close to your God and be in constant contact with Him, so as to draw from Him the grace you need in this dangerous world.

This evening we are going to consider another prominent aspect of Daniel’s life, his bold witness.

Daniel gave a powerful witness in the wicked land of Babylon, a witness to God, a witness to Christ, a witness to God’s grace as it had saved him, a witness to the church and kingdom of God. No matter where you turn in the book of Daniel you find this man of God testifying to and of his Lord. He did this not only by words, but he also demonstrated this in deeds. And his witness was bold; it was forward and open. Daniel did not hide his faith and his God; he put them out for all to see. He made his witness before an unbelieving and hateful world; before mighty kings, leaders of the world-powers of that day, knowing full well that it would cost him. He was bold; that was his courage too.

Tonight I want to show you that this bold witness is what you as courageous youth must also have and show. There is a stanza in the song “Dare to be a Daniel” which goes: “Dare to have a purpose firm! Dare to make it known!” That is what we will see in Daniel, and what we will learn to do by the grace of God. I call your attention to: “DANIEL’S BOLD WITNESS.”

HOW HE DEMONSTRATED A BOLD WITNESS

When we speak of witnessing, we usually put it in the realm of evangelism. We speak, for example, of “personal witnessing.” But that tends to restrict our idea of what it means to witness. We think it is only a special activity, something we do at certain times. But I want you to think broadly when we speak of witnessing tonight. I want you to see that witnessing is a way of life for the Christian, not a special activity. It is something we must always be doing.

Witnessing has to do with testifying to the truth of something based on what you’ve seen or heard or experienced. It has a legal connotation. A witness in court has to give testimony based on the evidence he’s seen or heard or experienced. Think of all the witnesses who have been involved in the O.J. Simpson trial and the variety of testimony they have had to give. The important thing in such wit-
nessing is that one testifies to the truth; he has to witness concerning what he truly knows has happened. A false witness who lies (perjury) is a great evil and a serious offence.

The Bible tells us that in a spiritual sense God’s people are His witnesses. “Ye are my witnesses” Jehovah said to His O.T. people in Isaiah 43:10. Don’t let the cult of “Jehovah’s Witnesses” take that beautiful name away from you. As Christians who have the truth of His Word, you are the Lord’s true witnesses, not they. They are the devil’s false witnesses. That we are the Lord’s witnesses means that, as we live in this world, we must view ourselves as being constantly in court. We are at all times called by God to take the witness stand and testify on His behalf. We must defend Him and His cause before men. And that means that we must tell the truth; our witness concerning God in this world must be true.

That true witness is found, first of all, in God’s Word. We testify to and of God based on what we’ve heard and seen from God’s own revelation in His Word. This whole book of truth is the basis of your testimony and the content of your witness. And secondly, that truth is found in your own heart as a saved sinner, because that is where God’s grace has worked to teach you the truth of His Word and make you know it and believe it personally. As saved, covenant young people, you can testify of the truth because you have and have experienced God’s truth in your own hearts and lives.

This testimony you give both by your talk and by your walk; by your lip as well as by your life. That’s why we say you are always giving it. Whatever you do, wherever you go, you are giving a witness to and of God, as a professing Christian. And that witness is either true or false. You are either speaking and living the truth according to God’s Word and grace, or you are speaking and living the lie contrary to God’s Word and grace. Daniel gave a true witness in the land of Babylon, and that is a powerful example for you.

Let’s look at some of the specific examples of his bold witness, so that we may learn from it and gain courage to have it. We don’t have to go far in the book of Daniel because already in chapter 1 we have an illustration of his bold witness. Daniel was confronted right away with a temptation, to eat the king’s dainties, his meat and wine. And notice what he did. First, he purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself. That’s courage enough. But then second, he went right to the prince of the eunuchs and made his bold request: “... Therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself,” v. 8. He didn’t hide his opposition to this; he didn’t make up some excuse. No, he openly told the man his position. He witnessed of His God and His way of holiness in a land of unholiness! He had a purpose firm and he dared to make it known!

That’s the witness you must have and give in this tempting Babylon you live in; Daniel is our example in courage and boldness. How many times are we not faced with defiling sins? How many of the world’s “daunties” are not set before you day after day, that you may “eat” and be corrupted?! You know what they are: the world’s fashions and music and movies, with its message of sexual pleasure and material pleasure. You know the defiling sins you confront when you are on your dates, both in terms of where you will spend your time and how you will end the evening. What testimony are you giving in these matters? Are you witnessing of God and His grace? Are you telling the truth according to His Word and His work in your hearts, or are you declaring the lie according to the devil and your own sinful nature? Dare to be a Daniel, and let this be the bold testimony of your heart and mouth, “I will not defile myself with Babylon’s sins!”

A second example of Daniel’s bold witness is found in the accounts of his interpretation of the two dreams of Nebuchadnezzar and of the handwriting on the wall during the feast of Belshazzar. As Daniel served in Nebuchadnezzar’s court as one of his wise counsellors, he was challenged by the dreams of this king. Without going into all the details, notice what Daniel did when the first dream concerning the image Nebuchadnezzar saw was revealed to him (chap. 2). He asked to be brought to the king and when he appeared before him, he boldly told him how it was that he knew the dream, “The secret which the king hath demanded cannot the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, the soothsayers, shew unto the king; But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days,” vss. 27, 28. Then he testified
boldly by telling the dream and its interpretation, v. 37ff (you may read this). Openly before this mighty ruler Daniel showed God and His sovereignty, Christ and His kingdom.

We find the same thing in chapter 4 with the second dream of Nebuchadnezzar, vss. 19ff (that of the great tree cut down). The interpretation of this dream was a hard thing to tell the king, but Daniel boldly testified to the truth. God is the sovereign King and Nebuchadnezzar must be humbled before Him to know that He rules!

And again, we find this courageous witness of Daniel in the interpretation of the handwriting on the wall during Belshazzar’s feast, chap. 5:17ff. (You may look this up.) Notice how Daniel plainly witnesses of God and how he rebukes this wicked man for his sin. It was a bold witness! In all of these cases he did not change and compromise God’s Word, but bravely spoke the truth.

In this respect also Daniel is an important and necessary example for us. God has revealed His truth and kingdom to us too, not by dreams but in His infallible Word, the Bible. He has made clear to us that He is the sovereign God Who rules in the nations of men. He has revealed that Christ is at His right hand and that He is soon coming to perfect His kingdom. He has told us that He is absolutely sovereign in salvation. He has made Himself Lord of our lives. What are we doing with this revelation? Is it our bold witness to tell the world this, and other Christians who question this? Are our mouths open, or shut? Are we openly telling all, or hiding the harder parts of the truth? Do our lives show plainly that we humbly yield to the sovereign control of God? Dare to be a Daniel and make known the truth that the Lord reigns!

Thirdly, Daniel witnessed boldly in one more way, during the reign of Darius, chapter 6. It was in the matter of prayer. He was put to the test again, this time with regard to his prayer practices, his devotional life. A law was made against his faith and practice. But boldly he went and did as he always did, testifying to His God and to His grace in his heart: “Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime,” v. 10. He would not change his godly habits, hide his faith, compromise his stand, though he knew it would bring him suffering. And notice his testimony afterward, “My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions’ mouths, that they have not hurt me . . . ,” v. 22. What a faith! v. 23. What a bold testimony!

Daniel’s example in this respect too calls us to a bold witness. God has given us the great privilege and duty of prayer. Out of love for God and gratitude to Him, out of longing for His fellowship, out of sheer need of Him and His grace, we ought to be in holy conversation with Him daily. And we don’t have to worry about the lions’ den, at least not yet. We have freedom to call upon God, privately and publicly. How is the witness of your life in the matter of devotion to God? Do people at school and work know you as a devoted Christian? Have they seen or heard you in prayer to your God? Or are you a best kept secret? Do you shrink lest others think you odd, pious? Are you willing to die for this witness? Keep in mind that the N.T. word for “witness” is literally “martyr!” Dare to be a Daniel! Dare to have a purpose firm, dare to make it known! Dare to stand alone, if need be!

HOW HE OBTAINED AND MAINTAINED A BOLD WITNESS

But how did Daniel get to be so bold? How did he maintain this witness while being tested and challenged over and over? What the book of Daniel reveals concerning this is also instructive for us.

Let’s begin by being sure we know this was not something Daniel had of himself. His witness was not anything natural in him. The strength and boldness of his testimony didn’t come from some human tap within himself; his courage to testify of the truth wasn’t obtained by human resolve and endeavor. Daniel knew that well. And we must understand that too. We don’t have and reveal this kind of testimony of ourselves. According to our human nature we are all spiritual “chickens,” afraid and ashamed to speak of God and His Son.

This bold witness was the fruit of God’s grace and saving faith in Daniel. God gave it to him and enabled him to be bold and brave in using it. Daniel was a believer, and he put his trust in the Lord for his strength to be a faithful witness of the truth by his lip and life. It is and must be the same with us.

But now, we know that God uses means to give us this strength and courage, and as His people use these means, they gain this strength and maintain this courage. That’s the way it was with Daniel. Let’s see how.
First, to be a bold witness you have to have a solid foundation. To be able to witness to the truth you have to know the truth, and that means a good training in it. Daniel had a good, covenantal education when he was a young man in Israel. He was trained in God's Word and in God's ways. And he embraced this training in the truth with a believing heart. That served him well when he got to Babylon and had to attend school there. And he continued to grow in that knowledge through the Word in Babylon. He revealed himself as a man of the Word, both in special revelations and in written form, cf. chap. 9:2. He had a heart to understand, a teachable spirit, cf. 10:12. That was the basis of his courage (courage comes from the French and Latin words for 'heart').

You have been given a good foundation too—your own educational training in the covenant, in home, church, school. If you have received that spiritually by faith, you are equipped to be God's witnesses in Babylon. Have you? Do you really know and believe God's truth? Are you standing strong in knowledge and conviction? Now, what are you doing with this spiritual training? Are you using it to be strong and brave in your witness in this world? Are you still seeking to grow in it? Are you hungry for the Word and do you use it daily to gain a stronger and bolder witness? (cf. Daniel 10:19 and 11:32).

Secondly, Daniel obtained and maintained his bold witness through the means of prayer. He was a man of faith, and faith is trust in God. He knew that he depended on the Lord for his knowledge and wisdom, for his strength to testify boldly, and therefore, he took his need to God in regular prayer. Three times a day was his habit. He lived close to his God; that was the secret of his bold witness.

Let me assure you that prayer is the second key to your obtaining and maintaining a strong and brave witness. Do we fully realize our dependence on God? Are we trying to live by ourselves? How is our prayer life? The strength of our witness is directly proportional to our prayer life. I believe you will agree with me that we need a greater devotion to God; we need to be diligent in seeking His help and strength. Private prayer leads to open witness. Use the means Daniel did, and you will be bold in your testimony!

Thirdly and finally, Daniel obtained and maintained his bold witness by being a sin-conscious man who repented of his sin and who committed himself to walk in a holy way. Nothing weakens and ultimately kills a Christian's witness faster than sin. If we are not conscious of it, if we are not avoiding it, if we are not repenting of it, it will put an end to our testimony to the truth. No matter how much we witness by our talk, if we do not deal with sin and put it away in our lives, our witness will die, and the world will mock.

Daniel knew this, and lived accordingly. Immediately when he got to Babylon he took a stand to be a holy man, to reject sin, whatever would defile him. That made him strong for the rest of the tests; that preserved his witness. So too in chap. 9 we find him confessing his sin, cf. vss. 3ff.

How about us? Do we have a concern to be holy? Have you resolved to fight sin and not let it rule you? Are you resisting anything that will weaken your witness? Are we sin-conscious? Do you confess your sin and turn from it? This is the way to have a strong and bold witness.

HOW HE RECEIVED GOD'S WITNESS FOR HIS BOLD WITNESS

I want to close with a serious note that will also encourage you. That is that God has a witness concerning us too, a witness concerning our witness. He is our Judge and He gives a testimony regarding our life and walk in this world. He witnesses the truth based on what He has seen in our lives. He witnesses everything, remember. If we have testified well of Him, He gives us a good testimony. But if we have not, then He testifies against us. Hebrews 11 speaks of this witness of God concerning His people. It tells us that Abel and Enoch and the other fathers of faith had a "good report" from God because of their faithful witness to and of Him in their lives.

Daniel understood this, for his name means "God is my judge." And as one of the heroes of faith who testified boldly of his Lord, he received a good report. God testified well of him and gave him his reward, eternal life. That's what he is now enjoying in the presence of his God.

What would God say of your witness tonight? How would He judge you? What testimony would He give? A good report? Or a bad one? What will be your reward, heaven or hell? I want you to hold that in your mind and on your heart. Witnessing of God is serious. But that must not put you in fear in a bad sense. Knowing this, let godly fear call you and encourage you to faithfulness in your witness. "Dare to be a Daniel. Dare to have a purpose firm. Dare to make it known." The church today needs such young people.

Rev. Terpstra is pastor of the South Holland Protestant Reformed Church in South Holland, Illinois.
HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 1995
CONVENTION

by Shari Faber

The Protestant Reformed Young People's Convention. What a week! It was a fun filled time spent with others of the same faith for the ultimate purpose of growing spiritually. Having attended the convention, I would like to take you through the following daily account of the activities and remark about some things I have learned about being a "Courageous Christian Youth."

August 6, Sunday

This evening is the annual pre-convention singspiration. It really starts the whole convention. Hundreds gather and the singing begins. What an inspiration! Uplifting! Enthusiastic! Glorifying God! It is what singing must be, so that we can sing from the heart the theme song of the convention: "The Fearlessness of Faith."

Jehovah is my light, And my salvation near,
Who shall my soul affright, Or cause my heart to fear?
While God my strength, My life sustains,
Secure from fear my soul remains.

Ever really think about those words? They have so much meaning, depth, and truth.

August 7, Monday

Luggage lines up the front of Grandville PRC while conventioners sign up to room with friends, receive their room keys, the schedule for the week, their ID bracelets, and meal cards.

Everyone is full of energy and excitement. At 9:00 a.m. about 60 older young people board one of the two buses and head out to Miner Lake for a day of waterskiing, tubing, volleyball and swimming, while the remaining conventioners went to Hope College for games. At the lake some of us sit in the grass and talk, getting to know others in our denomination from California, Iowa, New Jersey, Illinois, Canada and other places. Such fellowship will be remembered for a life time.

Uh Oh! Someone has been hurt while tubing. Everyone is trying to make her feel as comfortable as possible. We jump to take care of her every need in any way. At such times we realize that God uses these incidents to teach us how to treat others.

The convention is also a time in which to encourage each other in what we believe. Lunchtime
rolls around, and without a thought, many of us hungrily begin to eat, until someone courageously reminds us to stop and pray. This incident uncovered our weaknesses, but also tells us to be courageous as Christian young people; to remind, even admonish, each other when necessary.

Arriving at Hope College late in the afternoon, we all hurry to find our luggage and meet the rest of the group for a brief meeting and supper.

Finally all 340 of us gather for the first speech. This is the whole purpose, the heart, the essence of conventions. Rev. Mahtani began to speak on “Daniel—A Faithful Prayer Life.” We as young people need to learn and grow by the grace of God, and make application to our own lives. We need encouragement to resolve to be more faithful in our own private devotions, especially prayer. Like Daniel, we as young people must be courageous in the midst of a wicked world.

Miniature golf and bowling brought the events of the day to a close.

Now it is nearly midnight and the girls from the neighboring rooms on my floor gather for devotions with our chaperons. One of the best times are the devotions we have late at night and early in the morning. It is an opportunity to put to practice what we had heard earlier today about the importance of devotions.

**August 8, Tuesday**

Awakened at 6:00 by my “chap” banging on our door, I roll out of bed and get ready for a new day. We start out with devotions, thanking God in prayer for the day and for the strength which He gives.

This morning everyone lines up to get in on the convention picture. Somehow a few people even manage to get in on it twice!

Assembled at the Dimmet Chapel, we hear some brief messages and an introduction to the topic for the group discussions. “Private and Public Devotions” went along with what we had heard in yesterday’s speech. Sitting in a circle with twelve others, we share our own methods for devotions, answer various questions, and look at Daniel’s set example in his prayer life. We conclude that one must “Pray without ceasing” (1 Thessalonians 5:17), so that daily the child of God is constantly mindful of God and brings one’s thoughts toward Him.

With the above in mind, everyone departs for Holland State Park. What a marvelous creation we live in! How the handiwork of God is shown at the shore of Lake Michigan! We enjoy it by playing volleyball in the sand, swimming in the water, or walking the shore.

This evening, Rev. Terpstra addresses us about being a “Bold Witness.” We learn through what the Bible teaches in the book of Daniel the way in which we are to be a bold witness.

**August 9, Wednesday**

Aroused even earlier this morning, we begin the day with devotions. The topic today for the discussion groups is “Respecting Authority.” In that regard, we talk about the fifth commandment, how we should pray for those in authority, and how Daniel respected the authority over him.

Canoeing or tubing down the river in Newago is quite exciting. I hear laughter behind me as canoes tip over and fill with water. After three hours of being in the cold water we board the buses and return to Grand Rapids. The neighbors around Covenant Christian High School generously allowed us to use their homes to have a warm shower and make us feel clean once again.

Yet, the day is only half over. We have supper and then everyone goes to the baseball game in which the Grand Rapids Whitecaps play. Although it is not the most exciting game, a couple close slides occur and the last batter cracks the bat, finishing off the last inning.

**August 10, Thursday**

Devotions begin in the dorms, followed by the last speech of the convention. This one is about Daniel and making godly choices. The speaker stresses that we do consider ourselves to be Christians, yet, we must show that forth in our daily life, especially by whom our friends are and in everything we do.

We separate once again into smaller groups in which to discuss “Choosing Friends & Maintaining Friendships.” At this discussion the group I am with is fairly open, sharing some instances that they
have encountered in their own lives. Again, we look
at Bible passages, seeing what our friends ought to be. The highest example is that of Jesus as our friend.

Good discussion is really important since it shows an interest in spiritual matters which is essential for a believer. Our discussion gives one a glimpse of the future church, whether we as young people are interested in these things.

Since this is the last night of the convention, almost everyone has the idea that they want to enjoy every minute and stay up all night. This is made possible in the lock-in at the Dow Center. Many play basketball, walleyball, volleyball, or swim into the early hours of the morning.

**August 11, Friday**

This morning we have our devotions from I Peter 2: "They are later due to the lack of sleep for many conventioners.

Finally, with a week's worth of memories, we say our good-byes and perhaps snap a few pictures before heading home.

Today we are having a fun fair on campus! Everyone is going from game to game such as the bungee run, radar throw, and human bowling. Towards the end of the fair, a man wanders through and asks us who we are and what we are doing. He has some questions and opinions about the Bible and Christianity. Those talking with him do their best to answer his questions. Yes, in the midst of a good time one can be a witness to others.

The banquet, held on the campus makes for a delightful evening. Decorations make the room attractive and the meal served to us is scrumptious. Following the meal, we enjoy special numbers and a performance by a ventriloquist.

The convention was a busy time, full of good memories and fun activities. Conventions are a time in which young people can gather together to grow spiritually and encourage others. Hopefully, those who have gone can look back and realize they made new acquaintances with fellow believers, and how to be a courageous Christian youth. When that happens, the convention will have served its purpose. Let us continue to strive for this goal in future conventions.

*Shari is a member of Southwest Protestant Reformed Church in Grandville, Michigan.*
Watching Daily At My Gates

by Rev. J. Heys

October 1

Read Ephesians 2:1-5
We should bear in mind the fact that every husband and wife brings forth a child that by nature is spiritually dead. For God told Adam, that the day he committed his first sin, he would die. And that does not merely mean that he would die physically. He would, and did, die spiritually the moment he committed his first sin. Physical death came much later; but spiritual death came at once! And the awesome fact is that every descendant of a man and woman comes into being spiritually dead. But the comforting truth, in the text quoted above, is that God will make spiritually alive those whom He eternally chose, to be those for whom Christ would die. Here is a very, very comforting truth, presented by God, Who is rich in His mercy, and loves all those whom He chose in Christ.

October 2

Read Genesis 3:15.
Giving us spiritual life, God works enmity in us against Satan and sin. We do not change ourselves spiritually. We are changed by God's grace. And we owe God thanks every minute of our new spiritual lives, for our hatred against Satan and sin, and for our love of God, quickened by His grace. As we read in Ephesians 2:5, God quickened us together with Christ. Satan got all the descendants of fallen Adam and Eve to walk in sin by nature. And the awesome question is whether we find in our lives that walk of love toward God. Are you sure that you were born again? Your walk will reveal whether God began spiritual life in you.

October 3

Read Psalm 139:14.
There are two truths which we must believe and maintain. As we read in Scripture, we are fearfully and wonderfully made. God works upon us as His elect, in a most wonderful way. He performs marvellous works of grace upon us and in us. And it is because of this work of His grace that we have the comforting truth, which moves us to sing: "Praise God from Whom all blessings flow. Praise Him all creatures here below." Do you sing that with your heart, as well as with your mouth? Do you look forward to doing it so fully and constantly, when He brings you into His house on every Sabbath Day? Do you every day thank God for His gift of salvation? Or is your "worship of God" what you do on Sunday only?

October 4

Read I Corinthians 15:57.
In Scripture we read the comforting truth that God, being rich in His mercy and grace, gives His elect the victory, which brings them into heavenly blessedness. By nature we are born as spiritually dead. But our God causes every one of those, whom He chose in Christ, to be born with a spiritual life, and thus with heavenly blessedness. He causes every one of His elect to love Himself, and to find joy in serving Him. That truth we find in Ephesians 2:5. We, by God's grace are quickened together with Christ, revealing His grace upon us. Do you sing a new song to Jehovah, and thank Him for the wonders He promises His elect?

October 5

Read Ephesians 2:1-10
In His grace God raises us up spiritually, already in this life; and He will, when Christ returns, both bring us with body and soul into that coming New Jerusalem. He saves us from all our guilt, but also from all our love of sin. We will be made to sit in heavenly places. And as Paul wrote it—that is, God wrote it through Paul—we will assuredly sit in heavenly places. This will be the gift of God's grace, the gift Christ earned for us. Salvation is one hundred percent a gift of God's grace. We do deserve everlasting punishment. But by His grace God saves us through faith, which is His gift unto us, and in no way is our gift to Him.

October 6

Read John 1:16.
Hold on tightly to the truth that in God's fullness we receive grace for grace. What God does in His grace is what He does in His love and kindness, upon those who by nature deserve everlasting torment in hell! Bear in mind the awesome truth that, after they fell into their first sin, Adam and Eve deserved everlasting torment in hell! One's sin calls for everlasting punishment. The comforting truth, therefore, is that God promised to deal graciously with all His elect. And He sent Christ Jesus, His Son, to blot out the guilt of those whom He eternally chose in Christ. Still more, He sent His Son to earn for us a blessed life, far higher than Adam and Eve had before they fell into sin. It will be an everlasting blessedness.
October 7
Read Psalm 23:1-3
The most precious gift for us is to have God as our Shepherd. That precious possession we lost through Adam and Eve. God told them that, if they would disobey Him, they would die. Look up Genesis 2:17. That did not merely mean that they would die physically. They died spiritually. And in His grace God told Satan that He would save those whom He had chosen in Christ. Upon that grace of God we depend. As we read in Ephesians 2:8 we are saved by grace. We are not saved by our own works, but by that which God does in His grace. Confess God, therefore, to be your Shepherd; and also therefore all of your salvation to be the gift of God’s grace. We, through Satan, earned everlasting torment. By God’s grace we have peace which we shall never lose.

October 8
Read Ephesians 2:11-16.
The awesome truth is that by God’s grace we are saved. The whole human race was by Satan caused to die spiritually. But by God’s grace some of the human race are saved through His Son, Who came into our flesh, without an earthly father, and thus without any guilt, and with not sinful nature, as we all do. Most of mankind are, and can properly be called, anti-Christian, that is “against Christ.” For they are without true faith and spiritual hope. And nothing that they hope for will come. Foolishly they may even commit suicide, thinking that they will escape misery. We, however, by God’s grace will enter into an everlasting blessed peace. Thank God for this promise.

October 9
Read Romans 8:24-25.
Whether we do from God, receive that precious gift of hope, which God gives to His elect, depends upon God’s eternal will. So often we do say “I hope so.” And we merely mean that we desire something we do not yet have. But the hope of the child of God, having been born again, is certain expectation. To hope is to wait with the assurance of its coming completely, and most assuredly. We hope for what Christ earned for us, and for what we are absolutely sure He will return with, for our everlasting enjoyment. Do you have that hope for salvation and all its blessedness? By grace we are saved through faith. By grace, are you saved by God’s gift of faith to you?

October 10
Read Matthew 27:35-37.
The basic truth, which we should hold on to tightly, is that Christ Jesus, our Saviour, realized salvation for us by His cross. He had no personal sins which called for His crucifixion. The unbelieving Jews accused Him of sin, and wanted Him to be crucified for their carnal joy. But He reconciled us to God by His cross, removing all our guilt, which calls for our everlasting punishment in hell. What a blessed, comforting truth! Christ died on His cross so that we not only need no cross, but will live with Christ in heavenly glory. Does that truth fill you with a blessed confidence and joy?

October 11
Read Ephesians 2:17-22.
The awesome question is not whether we heard a man preach the truth that Christ saves us from sins and punishment. That promise we have. But the awesome question is whether God speaks that truth in our hearts, and causes us to believe that truth, causing us to be born again spiritually, and whether we are thankful for that comforting truth. What is so absolutely necessary is that God causes our hearts—not merely our tongues—to say: “All that I am I owe to Thee, Thy wisdom, Lord, has fashioned me.” Yes, sing that comforting truth, presented in Psaltery Numbers 383:1. In His grace God gave us that truth, and the joy that causes us to sing it.

October 12
Read Psalm 139:14.
God’s work, through His Son, Jesus Christ, is that we are fearfully and wonderfully made. That fearfulness is being full of awe and thankfulness for the salvation God began in us. Very correctly, every Sunday, God has His elect, who have been born again, sing: “Praise God from whom all blessings flow.” And, when we sing that, it must be the expression of our hearts, and not merely of our tongues and lips. Being fearfully and wonderfully made, we praise God, having Him in our hearts and minds, with a spiritual joy, which He implanted in us.

October 13
Are you correctly called a Christian? You may be called by that fellow citizens; but the awesome question is whether God calls you that. In Ephesians 2:19 we do find that comforting truth, concerning some men. There we read: “Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.” By His Spirit we are caused to be born again spiritually. And the important fact is whether He has made us to be such. The awesome question is whether God calls us to be citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven; and whether we are those, of whom it is true, that we are those to whom God’s blessings flow; whether we truly are Christians.

October 14
Read II Corinthians 6:16.
Our God in this passage calls us to be His holy temple. Now the Old Testament temple was the place where God revealed Himself, and the saints had sweet communion with Him. As we read in Ephesians 2:22 the believers are “built together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.” As those born again, we have sweet communion with God. The awesome question is whether we experience that communion, that is, have sweet communion with God. How often during the day do you have God, not only in your mind, but also in your heart? The question is not merely whether you have God in your mind. Is He in your heart? Are you a child of God, because He caused you to be born again, this time born spiritually? Do you eagerly go to Him in prayer, and thank Him for that which He gave you, and into which He led you? Or do you find fault in what He did for you? Do you go to sleep at night, confident that all is well, and working for your good?

October 15
Read Psalm 23.
A tremendously important fact and truth is presented to us by God through David, namely, that God is our Shepherd, taking care of us, and causing all things to work together for our good. Hold on tightly to that truth presented in the verses you read. Since God is our Shepherd, we have everything that happens as a blessing. We may have things that trouble our flesh. But do you believe that you lack nothing good that He sends upon you? There is much trouble for our flesh in this life. But are you convinced that God is your shepherd, and that He is, in love, taking care of you? Truly we want nothing in our lives, whereby God is not working it for our good. Sing that truth again: “All that I am I owe to Thee. Thy wisdom, Lord, hath fashioned me.”
October 16
Since God is our shepherd, we, every minute of our earthly lives get an experience which He, in His love and grace, brings upon us. As we read in I Peter 5:4 “When the chief shepherd shall come, and the sheep shall receive a crown of glory, that fadeth not away.” Indeed, when Christ, the chief shepherd, appears, we shall receive that crown of glory, that never fadeth away. And we can be sure that nothing that happens to us in this life can or will prevent us from getting the glory which God promises us. He is the Almighty God; and no one can, and nothing can, keep us from the everlasting glory, which God promises us. He is the ALMIGHTY GOD, and no one, and nothing, can keep us one step from the glory which He promises His elect. He is THE SHEPHERD. He always was and always will be such.

October 17
Read Psalm 46:1.
All of mankind know what physical help we need. It is obvious that, regardless of how much money we have, we are on the way to death, and the loss of all our earthly possessions. We all have troubles, as the Psalmist here declares. But the child of God is here assured that every child of God has refuge and strength. As we noted in Psalm 23, David very correctly states that the Lord is our Shepherd; and therefore we want nothing that is not good, but only what brings us blessings. Get that wonderful truth. We want nothing. Having God as our Saviour all is well, for He has all things under His control, and loves every one of His elect. Do you know God as your shepherd? He is almighty, and constantly faithful in fulfilling all His promises.
Read Psalm 130:7-8.

October 18
Read Psalm 116:8.
The awesome question is not whether God has already restored our bodies. Indeed He promises to do so, and will give us that blessing. But the question is whether He is pleased to deliver our souls from spiritual death, which we have at birth, because Adam and Eve were brought by Satan into spiritual death. But it pleases God to save the lives of every one of His elect, and that already in this life. Having our souls saved from spiritual death, we shall be saved with body, as well as soul, when Christ returns. Take hold of that blessed comforting truth presented in Psalm 116:9. There we read: “I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living.” We, by God’s grace, will live in the New Jerusalem, when it comes.

October 19
Read Psalm 34:10.
The basic element of our salvation is that God restores our souls in this life. Yes, He will restore our bodies when Christ returns. But we need to have our souls restored in this life. Hold on tightly to that truth in Psalm 23. The Lord is—not will become—our Shepherd, and we His sheep. Do you know any earthly sheep, that decided who his parents would be? Do you however believe that you are God’s sheep? Are you not only aware of, but rejoicing in that blessed truth that you are one of God’s sheep? He brought you into being as one of His sheep. And He also causes every one of these sheep to know, and rejoice in the truth that he is one of God’s sheep. Praise Him then for this blessed gift.

October 20
Read Psalm 130:1-8.
As pointed out before, we hope for everything that God promises His elect and that will be fulfilled. Now to hope is not merely to desire. To hope for what God promises us is to be convinced that He will give it to us. In fact to hope is to expect. By God’s grace we expect what He promises. He is not dependent on our acceptance. We depend upon His work of causing us to desire, with absolute assurance that He will give it to us, causing it to become ours. Do we not read in Psalm 23:1 that, because God is our shepherd, we will not lack what we need? Even though we walk through the valley where the shadow of death falls, as believers we are absolutely sure that every part of God’s promise will be fulfilled. We wait for what God promises us because He is God, the Almighty Father Who loves His elect.

October 21
As we are taught, and as we considered a few days ago, we, as those God eternally chose, are confident that we will dwell with God eternally in the New Jerusalem. By God’s grace we are absolutely sure that God will wipe away all the tears of our eyes, and that we shall dwell with God in that coming Kingdom of Heaven. We shall, with body as well as soul, be closer to God than the holy angels, who are now with Him in heaven. God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes. He will raise us up above all the angels that have been with Him in heaven since the week He created all things. What a blessing lies ahead for all the elect. What a gift for which we should and will be thankful, praising God’s Name, from Whom all blessings flow.

October 22
Read Romans 8:1-4.
What was not, the day Adam and Eve were created, now is today; and it calls for every child of God to sing His praises, because of its truth and blessedness. Adam and Eve had no guilt, as created, but they were condemned because of their sin. They had a blessed, pleasurable life, knowing God and walking in their love toward Him. But Satan came as a subtle enemy, hating God, and wanting Adam and Eve also to hate Him. He did get them to hate God and in it to sin against Him. And the awesome question we should ask is whether we listen to Satan, and walk in hatred against God. Are we living according to our flesh? We should get down on our knees, and pray to God for strength to live in love toward Him. Our calling is to fight against sin; and the lie of Satan, which gets man to believe; and the evil wherein to walk.

October 23
Read Romans 8:5.
What a blessed truth we find here. Minding the things of the Spirit is walking in love of and toward God. Sad to say, however, we still do have sin in our hearts and minds. Satan is controlling us in sinful ways, revealing hatred of God, rather than love of Him. But by God’s grace we, as born again children of God, must examine our hearts and minds, and pray to God for hatred of sin, and for love toward Him. Our calling is to pray to God for spiritual help, and for the guidance of His Spirit into ways of love toward Him. That we must not do simply and merely on Sunday, but every day from the moment that we wake up. Our calling is to pray for God’s Spirit to make us want and seek spiritual purity. Do you do so the minute that you awake in the morning?
October 24

Read Romans 8:6.
Get that blessed truth, and hold on tightly to it. To be spiritually minded is life and peace. Do you want peace with God? No, the question is not merely whether you want God to deal with you peacefully. Do you want your heart to love God and peacefully walk, every day and every moment, loving God and keeping His commandments? Do you simply want salvation in the sense of escape from the punishment which you deserve? The question surely is whether you want to walk in love of God. We were created in order to walk in such love of God. But Satan got all of us to be spiritually dead, in the sense that we did not love God, but hating Him walk and live against Him in all our thinking and willing. Do you want to be spiritually minded, and walk in love toward God every day, and every minute of every day?

October 25

Read Romans 8:14
What an awesome and significant truth our God presents here through the Apostle Paul. Absolutely every bit of our salvation depends upon God, and was designed by God, before we were born. Yes, when salvation begins in us, it is because God began it in us in His grace. We did not think and will any part of salvation until God began that thinking and willing in us. Satan got Adam and Eve, and also all their descendants, to be his sons and daughters. Our thankfulness, for every bit of salvation, is God's work upon all of us, and for all our knowledge of having been chosen unto it by God. Indeed we must be thankful for being given thanks for that salvation. God owes us nothing. We owe Him thanks for every bit of our salvation, and for our desire for it. We are led by the Spirit of God unto all proper thankfulness.

October 26

Read Romans 8:24-25.
That we hope to be saved means that we depend upon God for this desire as well as for the beginning of it. We must hold on tightly to the truth that we owe God thanks, for the desire for salvation as well as the salvation itself. We are not saved because we hope for it. We are thankful for it, because we believe that all that we are, we owe to God. As pointed out before: "All that I am I owe to Thee, Thy wisdom, Lord, hath fashioned me." By nature we do not see that salvation and hope for it. The Spirit makes us groan for salvation. Absolutely every part of our salvation is God's gift to us. Not simply on Sunday, and in church, but every day we should with our hearts sing praise to God, from Whom all our blessings flow. Do you have that thankfulness every day, and say it in your prayers?

October 27

Read Romans 8:28.
Here we have a most wonderful and comforting truth concerning our salvation. When God begins salvation in us He causes us to know that all things work together for good in us. All that happens is not going to please our flesh; and to die is to remove us from all our earthly possessions. But the blessed and comforting truth is that sickness and death work together for our good, in the sense that we are going to be with God in the blessed life of peace and holiness. We will be freed completely from Satan and sin; and we shall have sweet communion with God. Take hold then of that blessed truth in the verse read. All things shall work together, so that we have sweet communion with God in His house of many mansions. A sweeter gift there is not for us.

October 28

Read Romans 8:29-31.
Here we have a most blessed and comforting truth. All things have worked together for our good. We reach the blessedness which God predestinated us to receive. Find comfort in the truth that all this blessedness is absolutely sure, because the almighty, unchangeable God has promised it, but also begun it. Find comfort also in the truth that, through His Son, God has already realized such blessedness of body and soul. Hold on tightly also to the truth that our God Who promises this blessedness is the almighty, unchangeable God. No one and nothing can stop Him from fulfilling all His promises. And as the I AM, He will not change His mind or will. He will not turn against us, but turn us completely, as our God and Father. He spared not His own Son; and will most assuredly not spare us everlasting blessedness.

October 29

Read Romans 8:32.
A truth which we should maintain, and never brush aside, is that God freely gives us all the elements of our salvation. We must believe that, if we are going to enjoy our salvation. But believing that is only part of our salvation. We do not buy salvation, or get it because of what we do. We buy absolutely nothing from God. He gives us all of salvation, and as we read the other day, we are wonderfully and fearfully made. Faith is one hundred percent a gift of God's grace. As we read in Ephesians 2:8 and 9, faith is the gift of God's grace. It is not something that we give to God. It is that which God begins and gives to His elect. We owe God thanks for working faith in us. As we correctly sing: "Praise God from Whom all blessings flow."

October 30

Read Romans 8:35.
The awesome, blessed truth is that the salvation God has begun in us shall never leave us. Satan is trying very hard, by men and false doctrines, to get us against God, rather than to walk with Him in the love which He gave us. Get that truth, and hold on to it tightly: Neither we, nor Satan and his evil soldiers, can take from us the salvation which God began in us. Just look up Psalm 48:1. There we read: "Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised, in the city of our God, on the mountain of His holiness." Sing then with your heart as well as with your mouth: "Praise God from Whom all blessings flow." Having salvation begun in us, we will look for its coming fullness.

October 31

Read Romans 8:38-39.
What a blessed, comforting truth do we find here! Nothing and no one shall separate us from God and His grace. Bear in mind that the name Jehovah means I AM. There is absolutely no change taking place in Him. We, nor Satan, nor any fallen angels can change God's mind and will. He fulfills perfectly every part of His eternal counsel. Remember that every day, and never question what God causes to take place. Never doubt His promises. He is the I AM, and rightly we sing: "All that I am I owe to Thee, Thy wisdom Lord, hath fashioned me." Sing that in your heart, and you will cause your body to walk in love toward Him. Look forward to the day when He fulfills all His promises concerning our salvation. Praise God from Whom all blessings flow.
1. Who was the wife of King Ahab?
   a.) Ruth
   b.) Esther
   c.) Jezebel
   d.) Miriam

2. Who climbed a tree to see Jesus?
   a.) Philip
   b.) Mary Magdalene
   c.) Bartimaeus
   d.) Zacchaeus

3. Who tried to buy the power of the Holy Spirit from Peter?
   a.) Barnabas
   b.) Simon
   c.) Paul
   d.) Mark

4. Paul met Lydia, a seller of purple, in which city?
   a.) Ephesus
   b.) Corinth
   c.) Philippi
   d.) Lystra

5. Which son of Jacob suggested that Joseph be sold into slavery?
   a.) Judah
   b.) Simeon
   c.) Levi
   d.) Reuben

6. Who killed Sisera, general of the Canaanites, by driving a tent stake through his head while he slept?
   a.) Ehud
   b.) Joshua
   c.) Deborah
   d.) Jael

7. All of the following were brothers of Jesus, except:
   a.) Judas
   b.) Simon
   c.) James
   d.) Joses
   e.) Jason

8. Which prophet was known for saying, "Then they shall know that I am the Lord"?
   a.) Ezekiel
   b.) Isaiah
   c.) Malachi
   d.) Amos

9. The Tabernacle was located at all of the following places, except:
   a.) Gilgal
   b.) Shiloh
   c.) Bethel
   d.) Jerusalem

10. Upon contact with a corpse, Israelites were expected to:
    a.) Burn a red cow
    b.) Plant a tree as a symbol of a new life
    c.) Offer two doves on an altar
    d.) Burn the corpse

Answers on page 26.
In the midst of the darkness of the night, there appeared a light that filtered through the trees and down a pathway in order to make itself known to a wandering young woman. Her steps slowed to a pace that allowed her deep, blue eyes to focus on this light ahead as her mind filed through its possible sources.

The intensity of the light seemed to fade and strengthen as she walked on, but it never fully disappeared. When the light became dim, the path on which she was traveling was not as easy to follow. Once in awhile she lost sight of the light and the path completely only to realize the importance of keeping focused on her guide. Often, when she had lost track of her destination, she would encounter obstacles such as deep holes in the ground beneath her feet that she would stumble over, and large limbs she had to climb in order to move on. She would also experience fear soon after she lost touch with the light. It was then, through her helpless tears, that she began to pray for guidance and not long after, the light would once again appear before her eyes. She knew that the source of this light was the Lord.

Through it all she had faith that she would make it to the end. There were times when it seemed as if the end would never come but during these times she prayed to the Lord and through His unfailing guidance she received the strength and trust she needed to continue her journey. Even when the darkness around her seemed to be closing in and clutching onto her, she would lean on the Lord and depend on His light to carry her away from the cold grasp of the darkness.

At last she was approaching the final steps of her journey. The road was long and had brought about quite a few changes; during the course of this journey she had lost her youth and approached the hardships of growing old. It had been an experience she would always hold within the deepest corners of her soul, for it had brought her closer to the Lord and His love for her had become so real.

As her last step was taken, the light grew so strong that the woman fell weakly to the ground and shielded her eyes with her wrinkled hand. Her eyelids dropped and her breath was gradually taken away, but at the same time an old life was fading a new life was forming from the soul and through the work of the Lord. The weakness and frailty of human life was being replaced with the beauty and strength of the life to come. With her heart full of peace and happiness, a smile remained on the woman’s face as if she knew her time had finally come.

When her eyes were opened, all was new. The light was still before her, but now her eyes could see—the light was Jesus Christ standing before the throne of God in all His radiance and glory with His arms outstretched to receive her into His Heavenly Kingdom through a loving embrace. She had reached her destination. Never again would a single, painful tear ever escape from her deep, blue eyes.

II Peter 3:13 “Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, in which dwelleth righteousness.”

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God's Plan for Teens Lives

by Sarah Molenaar

Recently my parents were given a video called God's Plan for Finding Your Future Mate. This video is designed for teens and their parents to warn them of the dangers of dating and to show them the biblical pattern. I admit, when I looked at the title of the video I figured that my parents were going to say, "No dating. You're going to court." My parents watched this video first and then my sister and I watched it. I was very skeptical at first but I asked God to help me have an open mind and learn what He wanted for me in my life. So this is what I ask you to do before you continue reading.

First of all, dating is not biblical whatsoever. It is a tradition. In fact its roots are in the feminist movement. When a teen decides that he is going to date, he usually doesn't include Mom or Dad in it. Therefore dating is a threat to purity—one is exposed to extreme temptation when a girl and a guy are together, alone, at night, in a car (you catch my drift?). Dating threatens emotional stability—one gets so attached to a girl or guy that one would kill to be near him or her. Dating hampers spiritual growth—one's focus is to get a boyfriend or girlfriend instead of growing in grace and knowledge. Spiritual fellowship also suffers—a girl and a guy among a group of committed teens are "going" together and then they break up and the girl is jealous of the girl that the guy is now "going" with, and the focus is again on the girl/guy thing instead of good Christian fellowship. Future happiness is threatened because a person gives his emotions to the wrong person or to the right person at the wrong time.

Now, let's look at the biblical pattern. Think of Christ as a bridegroom. He, under the direction of His Father (God) sought a bride (the Church) to win her heart. So it is in the process of courtship. A young man tries to win a girl's heart for the purpose of a life-long commitment. First of all, teens must give their heart to their parents, who must teach them that God has only one person picked out for them to marry. Teens who are too young to be married should concentrate on their spiritual growth and seeking God instead of a boyfriend or girlfriend (Matt. 6:33). Teens should be friendly to everyone, but a girl should not seek a boyfriend at all. She should be the responder not the initiator. A guy should be mature enough to be married before he, under the direction of his father, begins seeking a wife. He must also be willing to pay a "price" for his bride (that way he will appreciate her even more once he gets her). When planning a wedding, make sure that God gets the glory.

This biblical pattern for finding the one God has picked out for you is better than dating because it bypasses the danger involved in dating because of parental involvement. It keeps the parents in charge because someone who is in love does not think too clearly. Parents and children will have a better relationship. It prevents breaking off engagements and gives the opportunity to see the virtues and faults of their child's future mate. Most importantly, it keeps the focus on God and not emotions.

If you have read this and want to submit to God's will for your life, praise God! Yet even if you have committed yourself to God's plan for your life, which means not dating, there can still be a dating, spirit in your heart. This is a fantasy in the heart—a friendliness that is actually flirtatiousness, an attempt emotionally to attract another person, a dating in the heart, and an uncontrolled "crush". When a person has a "crush" on someone he gives a piece of his heart to that person, and then these affections drift to another and another piece of your heart is given away. This goes on and when you think you want to be married to a certain person you only have a little piece of your heart to give to that person on your wedding day. The bond in your marriage will be weak and you will still remember and bring into your marriage all those previous "crushes" or romances.

You can have victory over this dating spirit and become a one - man - woman or a one - woman - man. There are five things that parents can do to help their teens with this problem area. They are 1) make it your biggest goal to get and keep your child's heart (see Proverbs 23:26). To do this, be interested in what your kids are interested in and
give them your undivided attention when they are speaking to you. Ask your kids, “Do I have your heart?” They will tell you the truth. 2) Teach your kids to be meek - meaning to surrender their rights and swallow their wills. When they learn meekness they will be able to control their emotions. 3) Don’t encourage boyfriend/girlfriend relationships in any form, not even in joking or teasing. 4) Teach these rules regularly and diligently. Teach! Teach! Teach! Every day! 5) Keep protection levels high. No child can be overprotected, only underprotected. Remember. The most loving thing a parent can say to their child is, “No.”

Now, there are things that young people can do to have victory over the dating spirit. First of all, give your heart fully to your parents. Trust them. They know and want what is best for you even though it may not sound too appealing. Think of how wonderful it will be to give your whole heart to your mate on your wedding day. Think of it like this: two whole hearts welded together equals a strong bond in marriage. When you are looking over at so-and-so and you think he is really cute or she is absolutely gorgeous, your heart starts beating hard and you are tempted to become emotionally attached to that person. Tell yourself right away to stop and pray for your future mate, whoever it may be. Pray that he or she will keep himself or herself pure and that they too will be a one-women man or a one-man women. Second, get a vision bigger than yourself or your future mate. Think of how you are going to raise your kids in a godly manner and that they too will do the same for their children and so on.

You may be thinking, “Who in the world is ever going to go along with this?” I thought that exact same thing, but then another thought took it’s place. If I only trust God for His best for my life, He’ll take care of it and give me just that. Don’t settle for second when you can have God’s best if you just wait on Him. He will show you and give His best for your life.

Oh, and by the way, there are many stories of successful courtships and on this video there were two told. There were pictures of a guy and a girl who were in this type of a relationship. The guy was really good looking and the girl wasn’t too bad looking either. The same was true with the other couple. It was really romantic only without the kissing and stuff (it was a blessing to see how the couples disciplined themselves in this way when, I am sure it was difficult). What I am trying to say is that using the biblical pattern of finding God’s plan for your mate is not at all boring. It is exciting to see what God can do. Just seek His kingdom and righteousness and all these things will be added unto you. That is a promise, but to get the other things you must first seek God with all your heart and He will take care of the rest.

Guest Article

The Compassionate Father

by Rev. C. Hanko

“And when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.”


A minister once began his sermon on the parable of the prodigal son somewhat like this: “You undoubtedly have heard many sermons on the familiar parable of the prodigal son, but I want to begin a sermon by stressing that this was a son in his father’s house.”

Carrying through that thought, let us take a look at this well known parable from the point of view of the father who loved and had compassion on his wayward son.

Well do I recall that when I and my brother and sisters (we were a family of eight children) wanted to go out for a while in the evening, my mother would ask, “Where are you going?” If our response was a shrug of the shoulders, we were advised to sit down and decide where we were going so that she knew where we were going. She also expected us to do as we said. But then the next question was, “When are you coming home?” If the answer was satisfactory we were sent on our way with the
final remark, "Remember, I am praying for you." That reminder had more effect on us than she realized. But we never could come home so quietly that she did not hear us. Yet most of us did not really mind, because we knew that she loved us and cared. "As a father loves his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear Him."

Yet there was one sister who was inclined to rebel at this strict discipline. She would repeatedly threaten to leave home. So one day my mother packed her belongings and told her that if that was her desire she could go. That gave her second thoughts. She stayed.

The Lord loves us with an eternal love as His chosen people in Christ Jesus. He bestows on us all the benefits of Father's house, all the good gifts that we receive from Him from day to day in the communion of saints in His church. He is strict with us and demands that we live up to the rules of the family only because He loves us. Therefore He often does as the father in the parable, divides unto us our share of the inheritance and lets us go. You notice that I said "often."

Consider for a moment that whenever we sin we are doing so with Father's goods. We rightly confess to God, "All that I am belongs to Thee." For "in Him we live and move and have our being." We live in Father's house, serving Him in love with all His goods that belong to us only as His sons. We sin with the eyes, ears, mouth, hands, feet and means that God entrusts to us.

Consider also that in His love for us God sometimes gives us over to our sin. Because of our sinful, rebellious nature we must learn the hard way. God gives Satan power to tempt us. He gives us over to the lusts of the eyes, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life. We are tempted and we fall. Think of David and of Peter, or just think of yourself at some specific occasion.

If it were not for Father's eternal, unchangeable love, we would most certainly perish in our sins. Little do we realize how much we offend and grieve God with our sins. He is hurt, deeply hurt, that we turn away from Him and despise His statutes. He justly becomes very angry with us, for it remains forever true that the soul that sins must die.

But, as the parable teaches us, Father's love for His wayward, profligate son never changes. Jesus proved that by receiving sinners and eating with them (Luke 15:2).

As long as the wayward son had money to spend he had many friends. But when he had wasted all of Father's goods in riotous living all his friends left him. He was all alone, completely deserted, penniless, starving. He found himself a job feeding pigs. To satisfy his hunger he had to wrestle with the pigs at their trough. The wages of sin is death. Well may we learn to pray, as Jesus teaches us, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one."

Only then did he wake up to the fact that Father loved him. Yes, only then does our heavenly Father reach out in love across the miles to draw us back to Him. You notice in the parable that all the while that the son is away from home his father yearned for him, sat by the window with his eye down the road desiring for his son to come home. He was the first one to see him, to run out to meet him, to embrace him, and silence him, so that he never finished the confession he had so carefully prepared in advance.

How little we as teenagers and even older sons and daughters realize how much pain we bring upon our parents with our foolishness, thoughtlessness and sins. Only when we become parents ourselves pacing the floor during the weary hours of the night waiting for John or Mary to come home do we realize why our parents were so strict, so insistent, so demanding, so straight-laced. But how much more we still daily offend our heavenly Father with our sinful pride and sins!

We might conclude from this parable that since God so freely forgives our sins, sin is not such a serious matter. We can sin with impunity. We get away with it. That seems to have been the conclusion of the elder brother, who is angry because his father freely receives and makes a feast for the son who wasted father's goods with harlots.

We can be sure that soon after the prodigal son was settled at home the father had a serious talk with him. He impressed on him anew that sin has its serious consequences, for accursed is every one who does not abide in all that is written in the book of the law to do it. God is merciful, but His mercy is a just mercy, since every sin is committed against the most high majesty of God. God is angry against sin for God's justice must be satisfied.

We ourselves cannot do that. No animal, angel or other person can do that for us. God's justice is satisfied only by the wonder of His grace that He gave His only begotten Son to suffer torments of eternal hell in our stead. Only through faith in Jesus Christ can we have peace in our souls.

Even that does not mean that there are no bitter consequences when we sin. Do you remember that David was forgiven for his sin with Bathsheba and Uriah, but after that the sword never departed.
from his house. Many young people ruin their lives when they are young, and many marriages are spoiled before the wedding night.

But even apart from that, our souls are sorely wounded when we sin. A soldier who comes from the battle field with a serious injury may recover, his wounds may heal, but the scar remains. Sin leaves its scar on our souls. We can wish it never happened, but wishing does not take away the sting of our offense. David prays, "Sins of youth remem-

ber not!" And Peter, long after the night when he denied his Lord writes in his first epistle, be clothed with the slave’s girdle of humility, for God resists the proud and gives grace to the humble. How well he knew.

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Guest Article

A Church United

by Jeffrey M. Kalsbeek

It is rather common these days to hear talk of church unity, a unity of different Christian faiths. This unity which is being promoted, encourages love for one another in the way of ignoring real significance, it is said. The majority of us have had acquaintances at work, at college, or even college professors, who are seeking unity among Christian men and women of all faiths and all denominations. This is, no doubt, very troubling to us as Protestant Reformed young people. Is it not true, that we are instructed by God to seek peace and unity, and to be humble and kind to everyone? In fact we are to be peacemakers (Matthew 5). Yet, we naturally ask, were our fathers and the church of the past wrong to hold stubbornly to small differences in doctrine and belief? Could it be that they were sinning in not remaining united with others who differed in belief, by having no love?

The question is basically, is the unity before described, true unity? It is likely that most of us will answer no to this question, but why then is this not a church unity that we should seek? To begin to answer this I think it is helpful first, to know what is meant when the "church" is spoken of, and second, to know the purpose of this "church."

The church, first, is the one body of all God's people seen as a whole. It consists of all God's people starting from Adam and Eve and ending with the last elect before Christ's return. This is the "organic" Church which grows from the beginning of history till the end. Picture a tree which starts from a seed and grows into a fully mature tree. It is the same organic way that Christ's church grows. We find this organic Church described in the Belgic Confession, article 27,

We believe and profess, one catholic or universal Church. This Church hath been from the beginning of the world and will be to the end thereof.

This is important to know, even though most of the time when we speak of the Church, we are speaking of the Church on the earth. The Church seen on the earth, it must be remembered, is only an earthly, visible manifestation of God's complete Church and will bear the marks of the Church of all ages.

When we understand that the Church is one complete body of believers past, present, and future, and see also that the present, visible Church is a part or manifestation of the whole, we can learn something about unity. What readily comes to mind is that this Church must already be united! How is it possible you ask for saints in heaven, on earth, and not even born, to be united? It is possible for Christ's Church of all ages to be united because it is a spiritual unity. Despite efforts to the contrary, there can never be a physical unity of the Church, it is always spiritual in nature based on the faith of the saints. The Heidelberg Catechism when answering the question, "What believest thou concerning the holy catholic church of Christ?", states in part, "The Son of God gathers, defends, and preserves . . . a church . . . agreeing in true faith." In other words,
the Church as it shows itself at any point in history, has the same confession of Christ. We as Christians then, are to be united to one another and the one complete Church of all ages in our confession and in our faith, and not first of all in a man made organization.

One reason, I think, why there is a desire for unity which pushes aside differences in belief, is a wrong conception of the Church. Christian churches today are starting from the premise that Christ’s Church, visible on the earth, is made up of all Christian religions, each belief or religion contributing differently to the service of God. Statements such as, “We all believe in the same Jesus,” or “We are all going to heaven, just getting there different ways,” are often heard. Another example is a popular movement today called “Promise Keepers,” which has for one of its goals, “to transcend denominational barriers,” recognizing all Christendom as the Church of Christ and seeking one united family. With this notion as a basis it is quite readily seen why so many churches can push aside differences in belief and instead join hands in unity. “If we all glorify God, no matter what we believe, what’s the big deal? Quit nit picking and start loving one another!”

Over against this, we have been faithfully instructed over the years that there is but one Spirit of Christ through which the Church of all ages is united (Ephesians 4:3-4; Belgic Confessions, article 27). Instead of many different spirits (beliefs) uniting to form a complete Church, the Church of Christ actually grows organically in the truth through the one Holy Spirit as it is revealed more and more throughout history. The Old Testament saints saw the truth in types and shadows, at Pentecost the Holy Spirit was poured out in greater measure, and the Church grew in the one truth. And still today, the Church grows and develops as the one Holy Spirit continues to be revealed. So we see, for example, that the Holy Spirit does not reveal a God Who is sovereign in salvation to one part of His Church and reveal Himself as a God Who depends upon men for their salvation to another part of His Church. From the beginning of time, to the end, the same Spirit is revealed to all of God’s people. So too, the believers on the earth are united one to another, not in one giant organization, but in the truth of God.

Just as a right understanding of the nature of Christ’s Church is important in the discussion of unity, so is a knowledge of what the purpose of that Church is. If we understand its purpose, anything which does not serve this purpose will be easily distinguished by us. Why did God save a remnant out of the human race? What is His purpose? God’s chief purpose in saving a Church is the glorification of Himself (Ephesians 1:5-6) through Jesus Christ. So then, the Church is to glorify God in the way of representing, confessing, and defending Jesus Christ, God’s revelation of Himself to man (Ephesians 1:5-6), and Christ’s cause in the world. It is important, I believe, to know the ultimate purpose God has for His Church in this day and age in which unity among all “Christians” is so vigorously sought. Inevitably the type of unity sought is unity which minimizes differences in belief and compromises the truth which God has revealed about Himself. The spirit of the day is summed up in an article in the Christian Reformed Church publication The Banner (3/6/95, p. 2). Under the title “It’s Time For Compromise” is stated,

... unity in love, if not always unity in doctrine, is crucial if the church is to fulfill its mission to proclaim the gospel.

Also in the same article,

... a compromise may require giving up the high degree of doctrinal conformity that we are used to for the sake of the united mission.

It is clear from these statements that the Christian churches around us teach a different purpose of the Church of Christ. It is well that we know this, as we will surely hear this taught to us if we attend a Christian college, and as we meet those who are the products of this teaching at work or in our neighborhood.

Knowing the primary purpose of the Church, we are able to put all other callings of the Church in their proper perspective. We are able to see the Church’s and our duty in the world.

For one example, the Church’s primary purpose is not missions. As was seen in the Banner article, mission work is an argument for a unity of all Christendom. Bickering about minor points of doctrine hinders the spread of the gospel, it is said. “All must join in a united mission for Christ.” But when missions are subservient to the Church’s true purpose, God’s Church will never allow its Saviour’s glory to be diminished or His Name blasphemed for any reason, not even if more people might like Him. Then His people are championing the cause of another, and are ashamed of their own Lord. There is no love for the true Christ, in compromising His gospel which has been entrusted to the Church (I Thessalonians 2:4).

Secondly, closely connected to this, it is also not the Church’s purpose to “make this world a
better place," or to Christianize this world. Much of the push for church unity, it seems, is for such a reason as making this earth ready for Christ to return and reign, a postmillennial view of the end.

Thirdly, there is the idea that it is our calling to show love and understanding for all views and all faiths. Not a calling to show love to people of different faiths only, but actually to show understanding for their beliefs, erroneous or not. To this we cannot agree if we are to glorify our God, in Christ. Instead, the Church is concerned primarily about defending her Lord against all that would misrepresent Him. The Church is always more concerned about offending Christ in the way of allowing Him to be dishonored, than she is about offending mere men who are unfaithful to Christ. The Church is Christ’s ambassador (II Corinthians 5:20) and she represents His glorious cause in the world. She first loves God with heart, mind, soul, and strength, and only then loves her neighbor as herself. For this reason the Church of the past held stubbornly to God’s revealed Word under fear of death. They loved God more than men.

The question still arises, is there any unity that we believers must seek, since we are actually already united to the Church of all ages? Yes, it is a seeking to be united to those of like faith. A congregation seeks other congregations with whom they agree in true faith and a denomination is formed. Yet it is a unity based on the faith proclaimed by the Church of the past, laid down in confessions. The confessions to which we hold are even called “Forms of Unity.” They are what will determine true spiritual unity, and they serve a second purpose in preserving the unity of the Church past, with the Church present, and future, in “one and the same Spirit.”

It is a glorious heritage, given to the church by pure grace, given that God might be glorified, given to the faithful, given never to be compromised.

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Missions and Witnessing

Point Them To the Gospel
and Jesus

by Tom Bergman

The Bible is a good thing to read and study. However, for a person who has never opened one, the length of it may be daunting. When you run across this person at work or school, it would be a good thing for you to point out certain passages. Beginning at Genesis 1:1 and ending in Revelation would not hurt. After all, God’s grace is powerful through His Word. The means of grace is the preaching of that Word. However, a concise overview is a valuable start for someone yet to understand the full gospel, but who still wants to know, ‘Why am I me, and why am I here?’

When a teenager is struggling with the tough questions of life, point them to the gospel and Jesus. Only through Jesus Christ will God work in the heart and save sinners. The following is a brief overview that might be good to use for such an outreach—you reaching out to someone who does not know God in his or her heart. Designed to be an evangelistic tool, this brief piece is based solely on the Word of God. Reach out and tell those around you about your God. And pray for His church—wherever, whomever, whenever.

Misery: (or, “There is no relief unless you see that you need it.”)

We’ll start with a familiar passage. Think it through. For example, you may not commit outward adultery and murder, but do you “think” adulterous thoughts or quietly hate others? If you do not love your neighbors, you hate them. You desire
to crush them in your pride, because first of all, you hate God. Of course, I am just as guilty as the next guy. But, regardless, this is the law we must live up to, yet none of us do—we all deserve eternal hell! We’re born unable to obey. (Incidentally, the way to check this and the way to read the Bible is to check and double check with other passages. The beautiful cohesiveness and lack of contradictions might tell you something special about the Word of God.) So, let’s check some.

* Read: Psalm 14: 1-3. What does this tell you?
* Read: II Samuel 12: 1-13. How about verse 7?
You and I are also “that man”.

Finding Answers / Comforting Relief !!!


* Read: Ephesians 2: 7-10. You are a bright individual. You figure it out. What if verses 8-9 were false? ... if it was by our own strength and goodness. All the logic of it would fall apart. Everything you found above about misery would be nonsense.


If Father in heaven has not worked in my heart, I cannot repent. But, if my heart is changed by the work of the Spirit of God, I can’t help but feel broken, sorry, and repentant. Because the Lord first loved me, I cannot help but seek mercy and forgiveness with my whole being, my whole life.

Why He has chosen you or me is a mystery to us finite-minded creatures. Nobody deserves it in the first place.

* Read: Acts 16: 19-32. Repent!
* Read: Psalm 34. Key on 6-9, 15-19. A heart-wrenching psalm. Does Father in heaven love a contrite (sorry, broken) soul who is lost, looking for help and answers? Let’s just say if the answer is no, then I have nothing to live for.

People Just Like You (or, “They probably had the same questions”).

* Read: Luke 17: 11-19. One outcast individual. Not only was his body healed; his heart was changed! He had to come back and thank Jesus Christ.

* Read: Mark 5: 25-34. Last passage. I simply wanted to point out a few helpful ones.

Touch the hem, repent... by faith... and what is promised to you? Nothing short of eternal life. The Lord gave all these people grace and mercy to live thankfully, conscious of forgiveness and salvation through Christ. Thankful for deliverance from the bondage of the law.

Freed from bondage, from misery. This goes right back to where we started in the Ten Commandments! It all fits!!!

Other Questions the Bible Can Answer:
* Why am I me?
* Why do people have all different opinions, even different versions of the Bible?
* What is the whole point of God’s eternal plan?
... of us even being here?
* Is this for real? Could it be some cruel joke?
Is this why we’re here?
* What exactly is the Bible?
* Who are Christians? What do they do?
* What if I choose to ignore these Bible readings? Not repent. Not be comforted. (Eventually, I’ll insist that you read about this in Pilgrim’s Progress—a terrific allegory, tough enough to challenge your sharp mind.)

Dear ___ Name _____________

If I lived how I want to by nature, I would be telling the Almighty God of heaven and earth that I know better than He. I have a better way, so I will take responsibility for my own actions. Yeah, right! Say that to the God of heaven and earth at Judgment. At the end of time it will be infinitely better for me to say, ‘Christ lives in me. He has taken up that responsibility and has paid in full with His blood.’

So, my whole life now is caught up with heavenly things, rather than earthly. And if you do not realize that worldly pleasures are worthless, ask a dying man what he is taking with him. Then come to the cross and repent with me.

In Christian love,

_________ your name here __________

Some letter like this might be a good introduction to the truths of the Word of God. Much can be added later, and further questions answered. This was intended to be short and sweet. Use it if you can as a witnessing tool. Not only sign your name to it, but do not forget to pray for God’s people in whom His Spirit has not yet worked.

No matter what type of broken family or pitiful “church” background they come from, they will have one thing going for them: your prayers on their behalf, directly to the God of justice, grace, and mercy. May God bless His Church with the understanding of His Word in their hearts.

___Tom is a member of Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church in Hudsonville, Michigan.
Answers to the Bible Quiz on page 21:

1. c. I Kings 21:5
2. d. Matthew 19:1-10
3. b. Simon. Acts 8:9. The English word “simony” (making a profit from religion) derives from this man’s name. What a way to become famous.
5. a. Genesis 37:26-27. Reuben made a feeble attempt to save Joseph (vs. 21, 29-30). Reuben (the first-born) had lost his right to the birthright for his immoral act with Bilhah, his father’s concubine (Genesis 35:22; 49:3-4). Simeon (second-born) and Levi (third-born) had lost their right to the birthright for the slaughter of the men at Shechem (Genesis 34:25-31; 49:5-7). Judah (fourth-born) was thus the natural heir to the birthright. It seemed, however, as if Jacob favored Joseph more, so Judah may have expected the birthright to pass to Joseph, and was thus jealous of him. This animosity passed to their heirs when the northern tribes, led by Ephraim (descendants of Joseph’s son Ephraim), seceded from the southern tribes, led by Judah.
6. d. Judges 4:21
7. e. Matthew 13:55
8. a. Ezekiel uses this phrase, or a version of it, more than 55 times.
9. c. The tabernacle was placed at Gilgal (Joshua 4:19), Shiloh (I Samuel 4:3), Nob (I Samuel 21:1), Gibeon (I Chronicles 21:29), and Jerusalem (II Samuel 6:17).
10. a. Numbers 19:5. A female, red cow was to be burned, the ashes mixed with water, and the mixture sprinkled on the people who came in contact with the corpse. Some say that the female gender and the red color (symbolizing blood) symbolized life. Note that planting a tree by an altar was something one should not do (Deuteronomy 16:21). Cremation, according to Rabbinic Literature (c.f., Aboda Zora), was not permitted. Doves were used for a burnt offering and sin offering.

Gem of the Month

Autumn Beauty

In the golden hush of autumn,
Wandering down a pathway rude,
The serenity and beauty
Fill my heart with solitude.

See the mist above the water,
Feel the cool of summer’s end.
Fallen leaves become a carpet
As my footsteps homeward wend.

I’m enchanted by the grandeur
Of an ordinary scene
Where the reds and golds of autumn
Now supplant the summer’s green.

If my Father clothes this planet
With enchantment such as this –
My poor mind can never fathom
Heaven’s splendor – heaven’s bliss.

Thelma Westra
Peace (Part 4)

A flash of light and the immediate boom sent Butterscotch scurrying to her master’s lap.

“You shoulda named that cat ‘Scaredy-Cat.’ Look at her shake!” said Jason to Julie.

But Julie ignored her little brother and simply comforted her new kitten. “It’s okay, Butterscotch, you’re all right...”

Then another clap of thunder, louder than the first, made Julie jump too. She doubled her efforts to put Butterscotch at ease, but the extra effort was as much to comfort herself as her kitten. Julie hated thunderstorms.

With no concern at all, Jason announced that he was going to his room to read a book. But with great concern, Julie hugged her kitten even closer. Mom had an appointment and would be back soon, but in the meantime—cr-rack! That one was close!

Julie scurried to Jason’s room. “Jason!”

Jason hated to take his eyes away from the page for a second, so without looking up simply jumbled, “Huh?”

“Don’t you think that one was close?”

“Huh? Oh, I guess so,” and with that he buried his nose even deeper into his book.

Julie went back to the kitchen with Butterscotch. Jason was no help at all. Or was he? She went back to his room once more. “Jason?”

He sighed, “Now what?”

“Well—,” suddenly Julie realized how much pride she’d have to give up to admit her fear, “well, aren’t you afraid, just a little?” Lightning illuminated the room as she spoke.

“No. Don’t you remember Jesus’ disciples in the boat? There was a big storm and they thought they were going to die, but Jesus made the storm stop, and He wondered why the disciples were afraid at all?”

Yes, Julie remembered, they had just read that story yesterday.

“Well,” Jason continued, “we belong to Jesus just the same as those disciples, right? He takes care of us, too.”

Soon the storm subsided and soon Julie’s fear subsided, too. But she pondered the peaceful faith of her brother for a long time.

Connie is the mother of 5 children and attends Hope Protestant Reformed Church in Walker, Michigan.

Find the underlined words from this text in the puzzle below:

“Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in Thee. Trust ye in the LORD forever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength.”

Isaiah 26:3, 4

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