

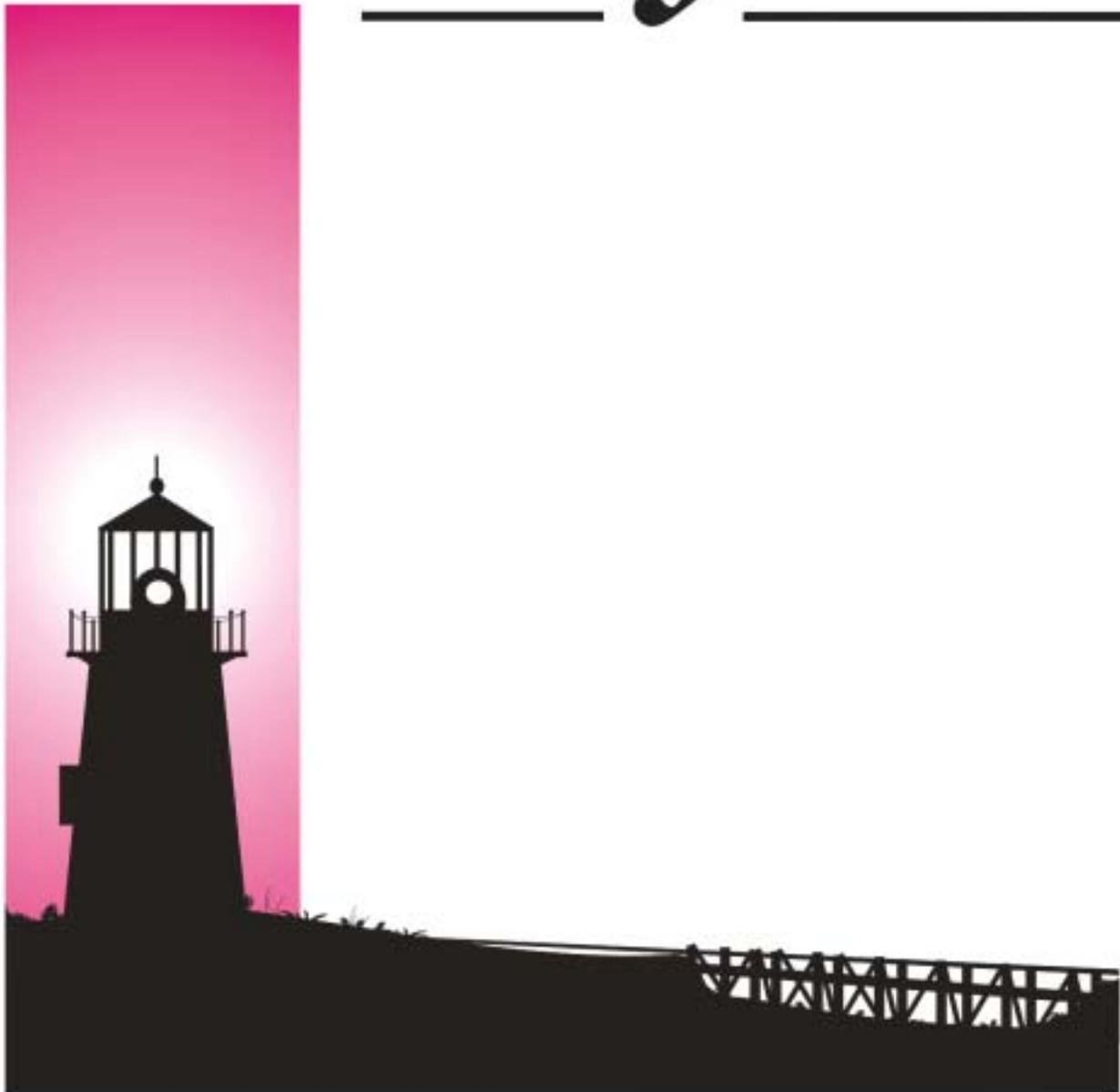
---

# *Beacon Lights*

---

May  
2000

Volume LIX  
Number 5





# Young People: An Asset to the Church



by Bruce Jabaay

*Reprinted from the February 1988 issue of Beacon Lights.*

**Y**oung people, you are a distinct and very important part of the church. You are the future leaders of God's Church and must prepare yourselves to maintain the truths of Scripture held forth by the Church. Paul directs Timothy in chapter 3:15, "know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." Fathers, mothers, pastors, elders, teachers, young people's leaders, and all of God's Church express with John in the third epistle, "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth." If you have that truth revealed to you through faith, then James tells us you will show that faith by your works. Now the question is, since you are a "peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Titus 2:14), what can *you* do to be an asset to the church?

First and foremost, you must continue to walk and grow in truth through constant prayer and study of God's Word. You need strength from God to be part of the "pillar and ground of the truth." Isaiah 40 inspires the weary and humbles the young by saying, "Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as of eagles; they shall run and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."

Studying Scripture is very hard work and demands a lot of time, but the spiritual rewards are very gratifying. If you are studying the prophecies of Daniel or the act of justification as taught in Romans, you need to do more than simply read the chapter(s). You must "search the Scriptures" as Christ commanded the Pharisees in John 5:39 for "they are they which testify of me." When searching through the Bible, it is extremely helpful to have ready access to cross references, commentaries, study guides, and a concordance. Remember "All scripture is given by inspiration of God.... That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works" (II Tim. 3:16-17).

Let's talk about the power of prayer. The real power of prayer is often overlooked. You will not change the will of God through prayer, so what good is prayer? Prayer will make you more conscious of God's will and bring you closer to God and His people. When praying, apply God's Word to your surroundings and circumstances, remembering in everything to give God the glory, and ask Him what He wills you to do. If you pray about the needs of the congregation you will be mindful of her needs and hopefully pricked in your heart to help in any way you can. When praying for the sick, you are mindful of their needs for comfort and God's continuing mercies of which they are reminded by your visit. When praying for the poor, you can give of what God has given you. You must also pray to "be not weary in well doing!"

It is then through Bible reading and prayer that you have a deep and clear sense of what your calling is in the church; and from which you receive strength and courage to be zealous in good works. Keeping this in mind, let's see how we can put this into practice.

In some ways, young people, these are the best years of your lives. You do not have the afflictions of old age or the grave responsibilities of raising a family. This is the time to busy yourselves with doing good works for God's people. "Remember now thy Creator, in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them" (Ecc. 12:1). Satan is very clever in

---

tempting young people with the sinful pleasures and vanities of youth. Do not give the best years of your life to Satan!

What can you do within the church? Be active! Come to society and catechism (post-confession as well), and sacrifice your time and energies preparing for these meetings. Visit the sick, lonely and down-hearted. Assist the needy. You don't have to be a pastor, elder or deacon to help members of your church. Neither do you have to act as a society when helping, but rather "Let no man despise thy youth: but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in Spirit, in faith, in purity" (I Tim. 4:12). You must be an example to all God's people. Encourage young people round about you to seek the kingdom of God rather than the sinful pleasure of youth—even when its not the popular thing to do. Fellowship with the younger and older generations, the rich and the poor, the simple and the wise, the strong and the weak, the meek and the bold, for we are "all" God's people.

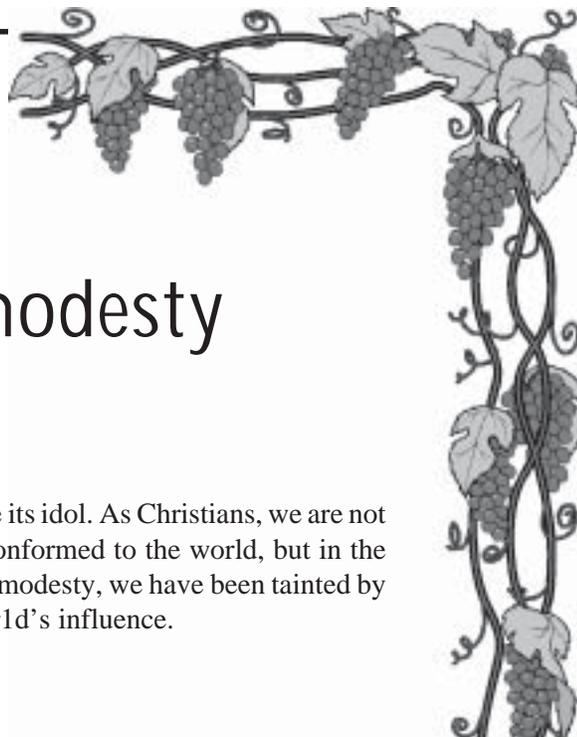
How you conduct yourself outside the church is also important to the church's well being. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5:16). Defend the truth and let it be known you are a child of God both in deed and conversation. When you pass up an opportunity to witness, ask yourself: "Is it because I am ashamed of the gospel and fear for my own honor and reputation?" When your Arminian friend remarks about God's love for all mankind, be ready to point out the truth of Scripture. Your actions are also very important, for remember you show your faith by your works. Not only must you witness but you must be careful not to fall into the ways of the world. Be on your guard, for "The wicked watcheth the righteous, and seeketh to slay him" (Psalm 37:32). You must not be a bad example and let the world point its finger and say "Aha!"

Being a good witness in your home is also very important to the church. Your younger brothers and sisters are watching you closely and are often caught saying, "Well, if he (she) can do it, so can I." Your parents will also be encouraged by your good works. The spiritual well being of the family is the life and breath of the church.

"What doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all they heart and with all thy soul" (Deut. 10:12). ❖

---

Fruitful Branches



## The Idolatry of Immodesty

by Bethany Haak

**M**agazines capitalize on immodesty to increase their subscriptions. Television networks uncover the body to boost their ratings. Advertisers use it to sell their products. Not only has the body become a tool of the world, but it has also

become its idol. As Christians, we are not to be conformed to the world, but in the area of modesty, we have been tainted by the world's influence.

---

The *American College Dictionary* defines modesty as “freedom from boastfulness, free of egotism, free of ostentation,” and “regard for decency of behavior, speech, and dress.” The Bible defines modesty as “the adornment of a meek and humble spirit” (I Peter 3:4). This is an area that needs to be addressed by Christians. Though all of us agree that the world has overstepped the boundaries of modesty, where do we set our own limits?

Since modesty is almost always associated with clothing, the Christian must regard the appearance as a special responsibility. Clothing was originally made to cover the body. The world now uses clothing, or the lack of it, to draw attention to the body. We must thoughtfully consider why we dress as we do. Being stylish is not wrong as long as we do not use “style” as a license to dress immodestly. Amy Vanderbilt in her book of etiquette says that “style is a question of character as well as external characteristics.” What does our clothing say about our character? Sometimes even Christian parents permit, or even encourage their daughters to wear what at one time was worn only by women of disrepute. They *want* their daughters to be noticed. Where do young women set their boundaries? Each may differ slightly, but we must listen to our consciences and to God’s Word. The Bible admonishes women to “adorn themselves in modest apparel,” in that “which becometh women professing godliness.”

But clothing is just one aspect of modesty. Modesty is more than apparel. It is also “decency of behavior and speech.” Immodesty is much more than short skirts and low cut dresses. We can also be immodest in our actions, which are often the expression of our pride and egotism, not our humility and modesty. We use our worldly possessions to aid us in immodesty. By flaunting our homes, our cars, our diamonds, our clothing, we add to our self-esteem by making others envious. Our talents and skills are used in the service of self. Whether it be an ability to shoot a basket, ride a motorcycle, or “ace” a test, if we use it to steal attention, it is a sin. Of all the words that we speak in one day, how many are about *our* feelings, *our* problems *our* ideas, *our* abilities *our* experiences, *our* accomplishments, and *our* opinions. So often our words are not about the God we serve or the friends we don’t deserve, but about the most important person to us—ourselves. Not only must we consider who we talk about, but how. So many of our words today are loud and shameless. Even dominating a conversation is a subtle form of immodesty.

---

Whether it be an ability to  
shoot a basket, ride a  
motorcycle, or “ace” a test,  
if we use it to steal  
attention, it is a sin.

---

Both our apparel and our actions express our attitude. Even among Christians, a modest view of life is not very popular. We dress up the sin of pride in the word self-esteem and allow ourselves to do or say anything that puts us in the center of attention. Instead of “esteeming others better than ourselves” we want the world to revolve around us.

Some of the most shameless displays of immodesty can be found on television talk shows. Speaking of them, Chicago Tribune columnist Leonard Pitts says, “Even if you can’t sing or tell a joke, you can still be famous, still have that 15 minutes. You just have to be willing to strip yourself naked: physically emotionally, spiritually—for the amusement of watching eyes...you wonder if they realize that 15 minutes is a very short span of time.” What are the reasons that we ought to be humble? The brevity of life can give us a perspective of our real importance. The Bible says that “all flesh is as grass...the grass withereth and the flower fadeth, but the word of the Lord endureth forever.” We are also to have the proper self-esteem. “In lowliest of mind let each esteem the other better than himself” (Phil. 2:3). This realization will become evident in our actions. The Bible speaks of the vanity of life, that pride goeth before destruction. Pride is condemned. Humility is praised. We see the greatest example of humility in Jesus Christ who subjected Himself to the death of the cross. When we see our unworthiness before a perfect God, we will become modest. ❖

---

*Bethany is a member of Bethel Protestant Reformed Church in Schaumburg, Illinois. She wrote this paper for a school assignment at Schaumburg Christian School.*

# The Baby of Tony and Jessica

by J.P. de Klerk

That Saturday morning Jessica Van Haren lay in bed with the thought, that she had been blessed in many ways. Only she could not yet make up her mind, whether she wanted to wake up already or not. It was the day of her twenty-fourth birthday. There was a green line put around that date on the calendar on the wall.

At half past seven, Tony, her husband, got up without making noise and he had softly drawn back the curtains. The old Frisian clock downstairs in the hall struck one time, so she quickly looked at her watch and saw also that the sun shone at the snow-covered landscape.

Since the day that they knew that a baby was on its way, Tony had started to watch over Jessica's well-being. No lifting of big or heavy things, go to bed in time, etc.

They were almost three years happily married. He was a notary's managing clerk in town and she had been in his office as a secretary, till the day that they were married by Tony's father, a minister in The Netherlands.

Jessica chose her most beautiful dress. The choice was not very difficult, since she only had just a few dresses in her wardrobe. Well, she preferred the light yellow silk one, because that matched best with her raven-black hair.

Apart from that, she did not want many visitors coming to congratulate her. She did not need a lot of curious looks and questions of people who wanted to know everything about her pregnancy; they annoyed her. Certain relatives had the habit to swamp her with good advice, others told her in every detail about all the things that could go wrong and what to do about it. Often he tried in vain to keep them busy by showing some al-



bums with photographs Tony had made, because he had travelled a lot abroad.

In fact, it was only uncle Frank, who was a born storyteller, who did keep people busy; he could always get a word in between the pieces of cake with whipped cream and the fruit cups. He was also the one who had let this small country house to them, in which once his parents had lived. It was built in 1917 by a well-known architect.

However, it became a pleasant evening together. Amongst the visitors had been doctor Binnema, who had surprised her with a glass scale with apricots he had grown in his own hothouse, where he had several trees and bushes with fruit that you could otherwise only get in the summer. He told her, when he left, that he wanted her to come to a department of the maternity home in the city where he could make a "scan" of her fetus, as to see if everything was all right. He advised against an X-ray, because that could harm the child.

Dr. Binnema knew Jessica Van Haren already since many years, because he had been the family doctor of her parents, till they were killed in a traffic accident. Since that day he was like a father to her and he had made it a habit to pay the Van Harens a visit once a month, apart from the birthdays and regardless the weather conditions. In the evening he usually left his car at home and came walking, which he liked to do often. He always told her and Tony, that it was good for your heart. As a matter of fact, he seemed to be usually in good health.

Jessica almost forgot the appointment, which she regarded as a routine obligation for mothers, but she was just in time. There was no snow anymore on the streets, which made matters easier for her.

---

But the “scan” wiped the smile from her doctor’s face. He was not satisfied with what he saw and said, “I want you to come back next week. I will ask a colleague to come and have a look. He is an expert in this field... Don’t worry. I often ask his opinion about scans. We have to be careful all the time. As long as it is possible, a prevention is always better than cure.”

When Jessica came home, Tony was home already, wanting to know how it went. When she had told him, he said that next week he would go with her. So they got to know doctor Louwers, who was a specialist in obstetrics. “I advise regular visits to my room in the hospital,” he said. “It appears to me, that something is missing or not yet developed. I am not sure. The heartbeat is normal and the child is lively. But, it could be that a part of the diaphragm is missing. I would like to see you next week, and there will also be a midwife to become familiar with you.”

This was a big shock for Jessica, but Tony said. “Doctor, please, tell us straightaway what we can expect.”

Doctor Louwers answered “We can not see everything on a scan, but probably each week something more. Only at the moment of birth we can see exactly what the condition of the baby is, and soon after that do an operation. I say in general that there is a forty percent survival rate.”

Tony put an arm around Jessica’s shoulders and nodded, “So, we will come to see you once a week.”

They went to see the minister of the church and they had a good, long talk with him. It was encouraging to hear this elderly, experienced man, who had become a rock amidst all the ups and downs of life, explaining how they could trust the Lord under all circumstances, that He would look after the three of them, before and after the birth of the child, which was God’s property. He understood how upset they were about what the doctors had said. He felt just as worried as they were.

Tony looked at him and saw something in him, that reminded him of his father, who lived in England. That man was at peace, living with God.

An hour later he went home with Jessica and he heard that she had had the same feeling. They also noticed that there was springtime in the air. Tony said, “Next week I will make a start with the room for the baby. Clear it out, painting the walls, varnishing the door, vinyl on the floor. Then the cradle can get its place, which you have so nicely decorated already, waiting in the spare room.”

She saw the excitement in his brown eyes. They stood still. She embraced and kissed him.

The day came that Dr. Binnema decided: “Jessica, it is time to go to the hospital. There you will be constantly under the control of Dr. Louwers and his staff. You get your own room, where you will be connected with a monitor. In this special ward there are eight rooms. All women with cases like yours. You can communicate with each other, every day there will be a minister who comes to have a talk, and also a lady of the social services. You have a telephone and an intercom within your reach. You must remember, it is very important, when your baby comes, that you go at once to the delivery room, where a whole team will be ready to take care of you and the child. That can be the difference between life and death for both of you... But we remain humans. It is God alone who will decide... I know, it is three weeks early. You did not expect this already, but we just minimize the risk.”

Tony and Jessica understood.

She quickly put some things in a suitcase and Tony brought her to the hospital, where Dr. Louwers and two midwives welcomed her.

Soon she became used to the new environment. Every night Tony came and they ate a meal in her room, with the compliments of the hospital.

She had also good talks with her next door neighbor, who was very optimistic about the whole matter.

The baby grew inside Jessica. She noticed the kicking and turning around every day. She said friendly, encouraging words, and played beautiful music.

A few days later her next door neighbor got her baby, but the doctors noticed that it had a heart problem.

Tony and Jessica were allowed to have a look at her. So they could also see where Jessica would have to go to. The nurses walked there with masks before their faces. It was very warm in the room, and everywhere there were machines, control panels, small ventilators, cylinders with oxygen, panels and dials, knobs and buttons.

The baby was connected with several wires, tubes, etc. Small lamps switched on and out, around the open incubator. Above it a sign said intensive care.

The birth of Wilhelmina van Haren was not a problem. Dr. Louwers said that her condition was much better than he had dared to expect. She could probably be operated on six days later. Soon the lungs could work themselves, he thought. Jessica was allowed to hold her

---

little right hand for a moment, and she whispered : “O God, many thanks.”

That same night she heard that the other baby had died...

Wilhelmina was operated on and everything became all right. In five weeks time the whole body worked perfectly. One machine after another was disconnected. She received the mothermilk instead of artificial food and was growing forty grams a day.

A week later they were allowed to go home: mother and child. But there was a warning: the lungs of

Wilhelmina needed yet time to develop further and should not be disturbed by visitors with a cold.

Wilhelmina became a lovely child. When she was five years old she knew already much about the Bible and Jesus Christ, her Saviour. She often surprised her parents with questions you would not yet expect from a child of her age. The Van Harens were very happy and thankful for this gift from God. ❖

---

*J.P. de Klerk is an author and journalist from Ashherst, New Zealand.*

---

## Creation Through the Spectacles of Scripture

# Theological Jello!

By Ken Ham

**H**ave you ever tried to nail jello to the wall? It will, of course, just break up and fall to the floor.

Sadly, particularly when it comes to the book of Genesis, some Biblical material is being presented to the Church in the name of “conservative” Christianity, but it is nothing more than what I call “theological jello.”

I have often quoted from many different Church leaders who admit that if they take Genesis in a straightforward way (reading it as history—in the same way Jesus and Paul did when quoting Genesis), then it’s obvious God created in six ordinary days and the Earth can’t be billions of years old.

But, most of these leaders insist that we must accept the billions of years for the age of the Earth (which they call “science”), and thus interpret Genesis accordingly. But if we use science to interpret the Word of God in Genesis, then if these leaders were consistent, they would have to reject the bodily Resurrection of Jesus Christ and the virgin birth. After all, science would regard such events as impossible.

The reason I believe in the bodily Resurrection of Christ, and the virgin birth, is because of the words of Scripture. And the reason I believe in six days of Creation is because of the words of Scripture (not because I am interpreting them in any way—I’m taking them at face value, as clearly written). Thus because of the words

of Scripture, I judge man’s theories accordingly—if they don’t agree, then they must be discarded.

This is how the Church leaders should be teaching their congregations, but this is not happening in most cases.

Recently, Baker Book House published a major work (*Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*) by a Christian scholar and theologian, Norman Geisler, which is supposed to help Christians defend the Christian faith. It’s sad to read the “theological jello” in this work that in my opinion undermines the authority of Scripture, particularly in Genesis. Thus, a door is unlocked to undermine the authority of God’s Word elsewhere. (This is not to say there is not some very useful material in this work.)

This book is typical of much of what is coming out of Christian circles today, applying a different way of interpreting the Scripture in Genesis as compared to the rest of the Bible.

For instance, the author admits that “there is *prima facie* evidence to indicate the days of Genesis 1 are indeed twenty-four-hour periods.” However, he then lists all the supposed problems with this view. Then Dr. Geisler comments: “If, of course, the days of Genesis are long periods of time, then there is no conflict with modern science on the age of the Earth. But even if the

---

days of Genesis are twenty-four hours there are still ways to reconcile long periods of time with Genesis 1-2.”

After reading this section, you really don't know what to believe, except that a person cannot say for sure they are or are not twenty-four-hour days. “Theological jello!”

When one reads his section on the Resurrection, numerous arguments for and against this event are given. But, the reader is told in no uncertain terms that one must accept the bodily Resurrection of Christ. Even though the author points to many evidences, he writes that ultimately it's God's Word that should be used to insist on the bodily Resurrection of Christ.

Now, here is the inconsistency I see time and time again in the Church today. The majority of Christian leaders reject six literal days of Creation on the basis of so-called “science,” yet they insist on the literal Resurrection of Christ, when science has never shown it to be possible.

The real issue is whether or not we are prepared to take God at His Word and to use it to judge the fallible theories of sinful man that attempt to explain a sin-cursed universe—or whether we use the fallible theories of man to judge the infallible Word.

Remember: “Every word of God is pure: he is a shield to them that put their trust in him. Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar” (Proverbs 30:5-6).

Let's be consistent in how we take God's Word. We need to let God speak to us, through the words of Scripture according to the type of language and literature, and to the best of our ability not impose ideas from *outside* the Bible on the Word of God. To do so is to make fallible, sinful man the authority.

Now some people will claim that believing in the bodily Resurrection of Jesus Christ is essential to the gospel (which it is: “if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain”), but believing in the six literal days of Creation is not. Think about this: as soon as one accepts billions of years, one has to accept millions of years of death, bloodshed, disease, thorns, and suffering in the fossil record *before* man's existence. To allow these things before sin is to undermine the gospel. If the shedding of blood occurred for millions of years before sin, then why has the shedding of blood anything at all to do with the atonement?

You see, rejecting the six literal days of Creation not only undermines the authority of Scripture, but it also undermines the gospel of Jesus Christ. ❖

---

*Ken Ham is Executive Director of Answers in Genesis. Reprinted with permission from the “ANSWERS update” March 2000 vol. 7 issue 3; a monthly newsletter equipping Christians to uphold the authority of the Bible from the very first verse. The Answers in Genesis website can be found at [www.AnswersInGenesis.org](http://www.AnswersInGenesis.org)*

---

Church Family

## Covenant Marriages (2) I Am a Companion of All Them That Fear Thee

by Aaron J. Cleveland

**W**e ended last time with the intent of positively setting forth the principles by which the young people of the church must be guided in their decisions regarding who they will marry. As we saw from God's Word in the last article, even as it is the holiness of God's covenant people which prohibits them from marrying those who are not one with them in faith, so it is our holiness as God's covenant

people which requires of us that we marry those who are fellow covenant members.

As the sub-title of this article indicates, Psalms 119:63 gives to covenant young people important instruction regarding friendships. Just as the Psalmist's confession was, so must our confession be, “I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts.” When we read this section of Psalm 119, we notice that David begins with the confession, “Thou

---

art my portion, O Lord.” This is the confession of a child of God who lives in covenant fellowship with His Lord. It follows that David’s friends were God’s friends. Those who live in covenant fellowship with God find that they desire the companionship of those who are of like faith so that they might speak of the Word of God with one another. They also find that they shun friendships with those who do not share in this covenant friendship with God. In fact, any person, activity, or object that gets in the way of this covenant fellowship is cast away. We do not have to read far into the Psalms to know that they are full of this kind of language. “Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly...But his delight is in the law of the Lord” (Psalm 1).

How important it is that this truth is understood, especially as it applies to the marriages that the young people of the church make. Our everyday friends are not only those who are of like faith, but also those whom we seek as marriage partners. Marriage is a picture of God’s covenant of friendship. Christ and His love and care for His Church is pictured. It follows that this picture is accurate only when the husband and wife are fellow covenant members. A husband will not behave as Christ in his marriage if he is ignorant concerning the truths of God’s Word or maintains false doctrines contrary to that Word. Neither will a wife submit to the loving leadership of her husband as the Church submits to the loving leadership of Christ if she is ignorant concerning God’s Word regarding this truth or maintains false doctrines. Especially important before marriage is that both the young man and the young women are agreed as

---

Especially important before marriage is that both the young man and the young women are agreed as to the beautiful truth of God’s covenant

---

to the beautiful truth of God’s covenant which He has established with believers and their children. A proper understanding of this truth will be a great guide and a comfort throughout marriage. Those who maintain a false view of this covenant will not know how to behave either as husband or wife in their marriage, neither will they have a proper understanding of how to instruct the children God gives them according to His will. Mar-

riage is a reflection of the relationship between Christ and His Church only when that marriage is between a husband and a wife who are walking together in submission to the truth of the Word of God. And this only by the work of the Spirit in their hearts.

Our form for the Confirmation of Marriage (found in the Psalter) speaks beautifully in this language regarding the callings of both the husband and wife in marriage. As to the calling of the husband, the form states:

that God has set you to be the head of your wife, that you, according to your ability, shall lead her with discretion; instructing, comforting, protecting her, as the head rules the body; yea, as Christ is the head, wisdom, consolation and assistance to his Church. Besides, you are to love your wife as your own body, as Christ hath loved his Church.

As to the calling of the wife, the form states:

You are to love your lawful husband, to honor and fear him, as also to be obedient unto him in all lawful things, as to your Lord, as the body is obedient to the head, and the Church to Christ.

It seems that all too often the necessity of being one in the faith is glossed over. Many Protestant Reformed young people date those of other denominations for long periods of time before a serious discussion takes place about the truths of God’s Word. Differences in doctrinal beliefs and holiness of life are said to be “minor” details that will be worked out eventually before marriage and

---

A truly Reformed young man, serious about marriage and the beautiful relationship it pictures, immediately recognizes the foolishness of dating a young woman, whom he knows is not one with him in doctrine. Likewise, a truly Reformed young woman knows God’s blessing will rest upon her marriage only when she is led into the truth’s of God’s Word by a husband who is one with her in faith.

---

*Father, forgive. They know not what they do:  
Some of my own were drawn into this snare,  
Not knowing that for them I give my life-  
For all my people I this cross do bear.*

*My earthly ties are severed now,  
So Mary, go with John;  
As son and mother you'll be known  
While life for you goes on.*

*Verily, I say to thee:  
Thou hast thy sin confessed;  
Today in Paradise with me  
Thou'lt dwell among the blest.*

**Words From The**

**C  
R  
O  
S  
S**

*I thirst—my throat is parched and sore,  
My tongue no moisture knows,  
A fiery pain surrounds my form;  
I'm mocked by cunning foes.*

*My God, my God, Thou hast forsaken Me.  
My flesh asks, Why? Since I Thy law obey.  
And yet I know. 'Tis for my people's sins  
That I must walk this agonizing way.*

*Dear Father, I have paid the price;  
I've suffered to the end;  
And now My spirit to Thy hands  
I willingly commend.*

*It is finished—death is vanquished.  
All the Father's perfect perfect plan  
In this act has been completed;  
Saved! What once was fallen man.*

*by Thelma Westra*

---

maybe even after marriage. The matter of greatest importance, that both are indeed one in faith and that both speak often of spiritual things, is put out of mind and not acted upon. A truly Reformed young man, serious about marriage and the beautiful relationship it pictures, immediately recognizes the foolishness of dating a young woman, whom he knows is not one with him in doctrine. Likewise, a truly Reformed young woman knows God's blessing will rest upon her marriage only when she is led into the truths of God's Word by a husband who is one with her in faith. Godly young people desiring to marry certainly seek as spouses those who are agreed with them in faith and walk. They immediately recognize as foolishness the standards that the world sets up for a "successful" marriage.

The question is asked in Amos 3:3, "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" This question is asked in the context of the nation of Israel walking contrary to the law of God. The answer to the question is an obvious "no." This question has in it a very important truth regarding covenant friendships, especially marriages. The truth is this, that two can walk together spiritually only when they are one in Christ. God's people are united to Him and to each other through Christ, the Word. We are friends of God and of each other only in Christ. Those who might claim to be our friends or those who desire to be close to us, but who do not confess and speak the truth about Christ (the Word) are not our friends at all, but rather our spiritual enemies. Likewise, those who are our true spiritual friends are the ones with whom we find ourselves speaking about the truth of the Word. One is reminded of this truth when he reads Luke 24:13-35. After reading this passage, we are reminded that it tells us of two who are traveling to the village of Emmaus. And as they are walking, they are talking together (vs. 14), or "communing" (vs. 15) about the death of Jesus, His burial, and how the women at the sepulchre said that He had risen from the dead. Evidently, their faith was very weak as they spoke of these things because when Jesus joined their company, He asked them why they were sad. As they continued to walk, Jesus began to "expound" to them from the Old Testament everything concerning Himself and what must happen to Him and rebukes them for being weak in faith (vs. 25). At the end of the day, the two "constrained" Jesus to eat with them and stay overnight. As they ate together, Jesus "took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew Him" (verses 30, 31). And then we have in verse 32 the beau-

tiful confession of what covenant fellowship with God and with each other through Christ is, when they say to each other, "Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?" This is what it means to walk together in spiritual agreement. It is walking together united in the confession of the truth of God's Word. This spiritual walking together means that we speak of this Word one with another. Just as the two confessed that their heart burned within them as they talked with Christ and as Scripture was opened to them, so also we confess that our greatest joy is that covenant fellowship we have with God and each other in Christ.

The whole life of the child of God is friendship. Primarily, it is friendship with God in Christ. However, out of this friendship flows the friendship that we have with others in the body of Christ. We also have friendship within the life of our families. Finally, husband and wife live in friendship. When our covenant fellowship with God is weak, we find that our friendships with others in the body of Christ are weak. In fact, we find that we are maintaining so-called "friendships" with those who do not agree with us in faith. This can be especially true of the young people of the church. The temptation is strong to have a lot in common with those who are really our spiritual enemies. We fool ourselves into thinking that we can become very close to someone and do many things together with them. Even though our consciences may prick us, we stifle our confession and walk so that we might "fit in" with them. The longer we do this, the more comfortable they become around us and we often are tempted to think that they really are our friends. If this sinful behavior is not repented of, and the "friendship" cut off, the disastrous consequence is quite often that a young man or a young woman of the church dates and soon marries one with whom a friendship should have been cut off long ago.

That is why the confession of the young people of the church must be, "I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts." It is in the way of walking in this confession that the young people of the church find that God will bring to them a godly husband or wife according to His will. And when the young people of the church marry those who are companions of God, they will find that the blessings of God will be upon their marriages and their covenant families. ❖

---

*Aaron is a member of Hope Protestant Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan.*



# The Song of Zion

## A Psalter-Psalm Devotional of Praise to Our Sovereign Covenant God

by Cornelius Jonker

### May 1 Read Luke 1:67-75

**Psalm 132:17 & 18** This psalm concludes with God's promise to make the horn of David to bud. Picture for a moment a male deer, who in early spring looks very ordinary and harmless as his female counterpart. But soon his horns begin to bud and in approximately ten weeks he has a large and powerful set of antlers. The church, too, though a remnant and seemingly helpless, yet culminates in Christ, the Anointed One, Who is all powerful. He is the lamp or light of the world, His kingdom shall flourish, but all of His enemies will be covered with shame. What assurance and comfort for the church! In Him we also are the light of the world. Will you hide that light today? Or will you strive to let it shine, that your Father in heaven may be glorified? Sing Psalter 367:5.

### May 2 Read Psalm 133

**Psalm 133:1** Whatever may have been the special occasion at one time for the composition of this psalm, we do not know for sure, but the essence of it is the blessedness when brethren dwell together in harmony and unity. This can apply to various situations and groups, such as a family, a kingdom, or especially a congregation. How many families are rent by feuds? How many kingdoms are destroyed by rivalries and jealousies? How many churches experience unrest and schisms because of bitter animosities amongst them? This doesn't mean that we may overlook sin just to keep a false peace. Never may we do that. But we certainly must follow Scriptural mandates and treat one another with love and patience, esteeming each other better than ourselves. Being at peace with one another—what a good and pleasant blessing! Sing Psalter 369:1.

### May 3 Read Ephesians 4:1-6

**Psalm 133:2 & 3** These verses give us two pictures of the benefits when brethren dwell together in peace and unity. One is the precious ointment which was poured on the head of the High Priest at his ordination. This fragrant oil was diffused over the priest's entire body, from the top of his head, then down his face and flowed to the bottom edge of his garment. In the true worship of God, the peace which springs from Christ as the Head descends upon the entire church. The other figure was the refreshing dew of Mount Hermon which descended upon Mount Zion, which denotes that a holy unity is productive of good results, as the dew moistens the earth to sustain life and growth. God commands His blessing where peace is cultivated. Let each of us do his or her part in promoting and maintaining true unity in Christ. Sing Psalter 371:1 & 2.

### May 4 Read Psalm 134

**Psalm 134:1 & 2** This short psalm is the last of the ones called gradual psalms or songs of degrees. It is a psalm of benediction and could likely refer to worshippers leaving the temple at the end of

the day. They speak to the priests and Levites who came on duty at sunset. They encourage them in the service of the Lord with the exclamation: "Behold!" or "Take notice!" Then the temple servants are exhorted to be busy with their hands, hearts and mouths as they labor in God's house. Now of course, this exhortation comes to us as well every day of our lives. Psalm 103 tells us to "Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name." As we said before, to bless means to praise or speak well of. Did you consciously bless the Lord as you arose from your bed this morning? Did you bless Him for the food He provided or for the strength to work today? Do not cease to bless and praise God, and you will experience His love and grace in your heart. Sing Psalter 372:1.

### May 5 Read Numbers 6:22-27

**Psalm 134:3** Yesterday we saw that the servants of the Lord who labor in His house were told to bless the Lord. Now in this last verse we find the priest responding to those who were departing from the temple. And he says: "The Lord that made heaven and earth bless thee out of Zion," a beautiful benediction from one who represents Christ Himself. Two things are mentioned here. The first is the title of Creator to set forth His power. And secondly the term Zion, which was a symbol of God's nearness to His people. By looking to Zion, His dwelling place, they looked to their loving Father. What a rich blessing! And this blessing is not restricted to just one period in history. God has always bestowed His priestly blessing on His church. He does so today. Pay attention to your pastor at the close of your worship services and bow your head in thanks. Sing Psalter 372:2.

### May 6 Read Psalm 135

**Psalm 135:1 & 2** This psalm has no title and is mainly made up of selections from other Scriptures. It begins with an exhortation to praise Jehovah for His goodness, for His electing love, for His greatness. It continues then to recount His judgments, His unchanging character, His denunciation of idols, and ends with more exhortations to praise His name. Three times in the first verse are we called to praise Jehovah and the setting is in the house of God. Pay heed to the importance of this, people of God! God calls us to this holy duty of praise and in this way He wills to be worshipped. Some congregations tomorrow will attempt to worship Him with drama, dances, and entertainment. This is not pleasing to God. He has instructed us in the proper manner of worship. Let us walk today in the light of His Word and prepare ourselves to praise Him tomorrow in the assembly of the saints. Sing Psalter 373:1.

### May 7 Read Deuteronomy 7:6-11

**Psalm 135:3 & 4** Do you believe in the doctrine of election? Many people don't, you know. They call it a cold doctrine that

---

makes man nothing more than a puppet and that a loving God would never choose some and reject others. But in our passage today we read that the Lord has chosen Jacob unto himself and Israel for his peculiar treasure. This is election, the very heart of the gospel, and which affords unspeakable comfort to God's people. (Take time to read the first head of doctrine in the Canons of Dordrecht) Because we have been chosen in Christ from eternity, we are able and willing to praise the Lord. God says this is good and this is pleasant. You will have many opportunities to praise God in your worship today. Be filled with praise in your singing, your giving, your prayers and hearing the gospel. Sing Psalter 373:2.

### **May 8** Read Job 28:23-28

**Psalm 135:5-7** In these verses we read of a strong personal conviction from the author of this psalm that the Lord is great. He knows it! He is convinced of it! God is so great that He does whatsoever He pleases in the entire creation. Nothing, absolutely nothing happens without His will and power. People of God, do you see God's hand in the clouds that are miraculously formed by vapours rising from the earth and descending again as rain? Do you see it in the storms, the lightning and rain? In short, do you see God's mighty hand when you behold all of His creation? The psalmist certainly did and exclaims that this is another reason to praise His name. So let each of us personally, with conviction, take these words on our lips: "For I know that the Lord is great, and that our Lord is above all gods." Sing Psalter 375:3 & 4.

### **May 9** Read Exodus 15:1-6

**Psalm 135:8 & 9** We all know about the great plagues that God sent upon Egypt and Pharaoh its king. God is to be praised also in this display of divine judgment upon that rebellious nation, and in this act of love to His people Israel. Each plague had its own significance. They struck at the very heart of Egypt, at its various deities, and showed how impotent they were in the hands of a sovereign God. The plagues culminated in the death of all firstborn, both of man and beast. It was divine retribution for their tyrannical oppression and acts of murder. Now we must smite our own breasts and think of "the firstborn of every creature," Jesus Christ, Who died for our sins. As we contemplate this great act of mercy, let us thank and praise God most fervently. Sing Psalter 373:5.

### **May 10** Read Deuteronomy 3:1-4

**Psalm 135:10-12** We saw yesterday that God delivered His people from the bondage in Egypt and today's verses show the reason. He did not leave them to wander indefinitely but brought them to Canaan the promised land. This land was occupied by nations whose cup of iniquity was full, and two mighty kings who first opposed them are mentioned by name. God, through Joshua destroyed those nations and led His people into the land of their inheritance. This typifies that all the foes of God's people, namely Satan and the wicked world, shall be overthrown, for the greater Joshua, our Lord Jesus Christ, leads us as our conquering King and will surely bring us into that heavenly Canaan. Pray that you may be counted worthy to serve in His army, and by His power fight the good fight of faith. Sing Psalter 373:6.

### **May 11** Read Exodus 3:15-15

**Psalm 135:13 & 14** We have just read that God's name endureth forever. Implied in God's name are all His virtues. To name just a few are His justice, mercy and love. Why is it important for us that God's name is eternal? If His name ever perished, we would perish as well and be hopelessly lost. Today's passage also informs us that God will judge His people and repent Himself concerning His

servants. God is not a man that He should repent or change His mind, yet there is a change in the event itself. His people though chastened by trials will be vindicated and be objects of His pity. God is the same from generation to generation. He beholds His people in Christ. Because He is eternal, not one of His elect saints shall ever be lost. Praise Him for that glorious hope and cling to Him by faith. Sing Psalter 373:7.

### **May 12** Read Habakkuk 2:18-20

**Psalm 135:15-18** We have a great contrast in these verses from the preceding ones. As we have seen, God's name, His power, His mercy and justice were extolled as reasons and incentives to praise Him. Now we are shown the utter helplessness of heathen idols which men foolishly serve as their gods. We would never do that, would we? What about some of our pleasures that we love so much that they interfere with our spiritual duties? Could it possibly be said of us that we are lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God? We live in a materialistic society that makes gods of sports, careers, money and worldly possessions. Let's not get caught up in these to the extent that our spiritual calling suffers. Many of these things are not sinful in themselves, but beware lest we put our trust and confidence in them rather than in the living God Who has called us to a life of obedience. Sing Psalter 373:8.

### **May 13** Read I Chronicles 29:10-13

**Psalm 135:19-21** This psalm comes to a close with exhortations to bless the Lord. In Psalm 115 we have similar verses, only there we read the word "trust" instead of "bless." To trust is to confide in, or rely upon. When we bless God we speak well of Him. When God blesses us, He bestows good upon us. All are called to bless God. First Israel, the church, is addressed, then the ministers of the sanctuary and their attendants. Finally, all men everywhere who fear the Lord are called to bless Him. The Lord delights in His people and is pleased when they praise and bless His name. They can do this only by His work of grace in their hearts. In the final verse, we see blessing constantly ascending from Zion to God and God perpetually blessing His people by dwelling with them in Zion. No wonder the psalmist exclaims "Praise ye the Lord" or "Hallelujah." Sing Psalter 373:9 & 10.

### **May 14** Read II Chronicles 7:1-3

**Psalm 136:1-3** Of all the psalms in Scripture this one is unique in its structure. From the striking form of it, and because we read in II Chronicles that it was sung at the dedication of Solomon's temple and by the armies of Jehoshaphat, we may infer that it was very popular among God's people. It is a psalm of praise. The first line of each verse gives the theme and the second line is the response or refrain. Our verses for today exhort us to thank the Lord, Who is described as the God of gods and Lord of lords. He is the Supreme Being, the very essence of perfection, dominion and power. People of God, we are privileged to serve this great King and hear His Word today in divine worship. Let us contemplate His holiness, think on His lovingkindnesses, and break forth in the chorus: O give thanks unto the Lord, for His mercy endures forever. Sing Psalter 376:1.

### **May 15** Read Jeremiah 10:10-12

**Psalm 136:4-6** Have you ever pondered the question: Why did God make the heavens and earth and all that they contain? Unbelieving man denies this truth, of course. They do not want to be accountable to a just and holy God and will propose any and all theories to suit their own foolish ends. To answer our question we turn to the refrain of each verse, "for his mercy endureth forever."

---

He made all things in His mercy for His church and for His own glory. From all eternity He chose in Christ a people to be born and nurtured in His creation and for their sakes alone. The wicked are mere scaffolding in His hands and will be destroyed as the tares which grew up with the wheat. “For all things are for your sakes...to the glory of God.” II Cor. 4:15. Sing Psalter 376:2.

### May 16 Read Genesis 1:14-18

**Psalm 136:7-9** The psalmist continues to extol the power of the Creator. We take for granted that the sun will rise each day, that the moon will appear at night along with the grand array of stars. Can we possibly grasp the complexity and vastness of the solar system? Men try to explore and explain it without God, even though creation itself testifies of God, so they are without excuse. God is in complete control every moment. He created light which is the life and soul of the universe and His lights rule both the day and the night. He does all this for His own glory and for His elect’s sake because His mercy endures forever. People of God, walk in the light. Look in faith to your redeemer, Jesus Christ, Who said: “I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.” John 12:46. Sing Psalter 377:4 & 5.

### May 17 Read Exodus 12:29-26

**Psalm 136:10-12** What does the deliverance of an ancient people who were slaves in the power of a cruel king mean to you? Perhaps nothing, you might venture to say. Yet, it is so important! It is so important that every Sunday we hear about it when the Law of God is read. Of course it was Israel, God’s chosen people, whom He delivered from the house of bondage. It took a strong hand and a stretched out arm—a symbol of God’s power. It was accomplished by the death of Egypt’s firstborn. This is a picture of our deliverance from the bondage of sin and at what a cost! It took the death of Christ, The Firstborn, to redeem us out of that bondage. Why did God do that? Because He loved us and because His mercy endureth forever. Praise and thank Him for that great deliverance. Sing Psalter 376:3.

### May 18 Read Exodus 12:21-28

**Psalm 136:13-15** The psalmist continues to recount God’s display of extraordinary wonders, this time the dividing of the Red Sea so Israel could pass through it on dry ground. The world in foolish unbelief tries to vainly explain this phenomenon as some natural happening. But by faith, we know that this amazing miracle, as all of God’s wonders, had a special significance. It pointed to the antithesis, for one thing, between God’s people and the world. Israel was saved but Egypt perished in judgment. In the prayer of our baptism form we read that the obstinate Pharaoh and his host were drowned in the Red Sea, but God led His people through on dry ground by which baptism was signified. People of God, cherish your incorporation into that covenant of grace which marks you as separate from the unbelieving world. Walk accordingly then and thank Him Whose mercy endureth forever. Sing Psalter 376:4.

### May 19 Read Deuteronomy 8:1-6

**Psalm 136:16** Our verse today is very short but it covers forty years of God’s guidance of Israel through the wilderness. Much history was made. Many grievous sins were committed. Many miracles were wrought. Many people perished. But through it all, God was faithful and Israel was led with unerring wisdom. He provided manna, symbolic of Christ the living bread. He gave them water from the rock and that Rock was Christ! Their clothes and shoes never wore out and they never lost their way. This same God leads us today. The day of special miracles is past but we have

God’s Word to lead us and His Spirit to dwell in us. We are refreshed by the means of grace as we travel in our wilderness. Through the ministers of the gospel, God is pleased to provide us with the bread and water of life. Be careful to follow this Guide and you will never lose your way, for His mercy endureth forever. Sing Psalter 377:2.

### May 20 Read Psalm 2

**Psalm 136:17-22** Once again we encounter Og, king of Bashan, and Sihon, king of the Amorites. These were formidable adversaries whose territories stood in the way of Israel’s entrance into the promised land. Sihon had conquered Moab previously and had acquired all their land. Og was a giant and Scripture tells us that his bedstead was made of iron and measured thirteen and one half feet by six feet. Talk about a king sized bed! But who can stand before the King of all the earth? We read in Is. 40:22, “It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers.” What a comfort this history is for us. The battle is the Lord’s, and our inheritance in those heavenly mansions being prepared is secure because His mercy endureth forever. Sing Psalter 376:5.

### May 21 Read John 15:16-19

**Psalm 136:23 & 24** You have probably heard this statement made on occasion to describe someone: “He doesn’t have an enemy in the world,” meaning presumably that this person is friendly and good natured. But how true is this? It isn’t true at all, really. Every one of us has enemies. In fact, one of our creeds tells us that we have *mortal* enemies, namely the devil, the world, and our own flesh that constantly assault us. Add to this our depraved nature and you can understand how well one of our verses for today describes our condition—that of a low estate. But thankfully we are not left there. God remembers us and redeems us in Christ. You will hear of that redemption today as you take your place in God’s house. Listen attentively and pray that your hearing may be mixed with faith—a gift from Him whose mercy endures forever. Sing Psalter 377:6.

### May 22 Read Isaiah 54:7-10

**Psalm 136:25 & 26** The psalm closes with a final statement regarding God’s providence to all His creatures. He giveth food to all flesh, both man and beast. We have recounted throughout this psalm the greatness and might of God. We saw His power as creator, deliverer, leader and conqueror. Now we see Him as a loving Father Who provides His creatures with their daily needs. All because His mercy endures forever. O no, He doesn’t give food to the wicked in His mercy. To be sure, He gives good gifts to them such as food, rain and sunshine, but never in His mercy and grace. In fact He is angry with them every day (Ps. 7:11). People of God, put your trust in Him alone and echo with the psalmist: “O give thanks unto the God of heaven: for his mercy endureth forever.” Sing Psalter 378:3.

### May 23 Read Lamentations 1:1-5

**Psalm 137:1 & 2** This psalm depicts the unutterable sorrow and sense of desolation which the people of God experienced when they were forcibly removed from their land, especially their beloved Zion. To be denied the comforts of their homes and surroundings was bad enough, but to be deprived of their worship in God’s house was to them unspeakable sorrow. Even though they sat upon the banks of the rivers shaded by willow trees, their minds were too heavily wounded by God’s chastening to take up their instruments of music. How would we react if we were in the same circumstances, namely to be deprived of gathering in God’s house? Think about it

---

people of God, be thankful for this privilege and be faithful and diligent in your worship. Sing Psalter 379:1.

#### **May 24** Read Lamentations 1:6-9

**Psalm 137:3 & 4** Yesterday we saw the depths of sorrow into which the Jewish exiles were plunged when they were taken captive to the land of Chaldea and how they wept when they remembered Zion. Now to greatly increase their misery, their captors demanded them to sing the songs of their beloved Zion. These songs meant nothing to their captors, but they wished to reproach God's people and blaspheme their God. Their refusal to do so is humbly worded by being put in the form of a question. Chaldea and its inhabitants are not worthy of the honor of having God's praises sung in it. They will certainly be willing to sing God's praises again, but in the way of waiting for God's deliverance and restoration of public worship. People of God, we still have the privilege to sing the songs of Zion personally and in corporate worship. Don't take this for granted. God is pleased with this aspect of our worship. Sing, for He is worthy! Sing Psalter 379:2 & 3.

#### **May 25** Read Isaiah 35:4-10

**Psalm 137:5 & 6** To sing Zion's songs for the pleasure of Zion's foes would be to forget Jerusalem. The psalmist changes the "we" in the preceding verses to the personal pronoun "I." Each of God's people in captivity pledges to remember Jerusalem, a symbol of God's dwelling place. They emphasize this by asserting that it were better to have a useless hand or a mouth turned to silence, so that they could never play or sing again, than to forget Jerusalem their chiefest joy. What a confession! Young people, is this your confession too? Can you really say that God's house, His worship, and His people are your greatest joy? Parents, is the means of grace and the communion of saints the most important and joyful aspect of your life? It should be, it must be, and by God's grace it is! Sing Psalter 379:4 & 5.

#### **May 26** Read Obadiah 1:8-15

**Psalm 137:7-9** This psalm which began in expressions of sorrow and sadness now breaks forth in burning indignation and imprecations upon the adversaries of Israel who destroyed Jerusalem and carried them captive to Babylon. Edom, who because of kinship to Israel and who should have been friendly, is singled out for judgment because of his wicked conspiracy with Babylon. He willingly helped in tearing down the walls of Jerusalem and exulted in their terrible calamity. Babylon is told that she will be destroyed and will receive just retribution for her unspeakable cruelties. God is terrible in His judgments upon the wicked. They will say to the mountains and rocks: "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne." Revelation 6:16. Although God's people may and will suffer persecution, the Lord knoweth those who are His and will surely save them in the way of faith and obedience. Sing Psalter 379:6.

#### **May 27** Read Psalm 138

**Psalm 138:1 & 2** This psalm begins with a familiar but important phrase, "I will praise thee with my whole heart." Can you make these words your own? When you praise God do you engage in it half heartedly? Tomorrow morning, the first words you will utter in divine worship will be "Praise God from Whom all blessings flow." Will you be wide awake and ready to extol His name with enthusiasm? This is what God requires and He is not pleased with anything less. God is worthy to be praised for innumerable reasons, but the psalmist names two—His lovingkindness and truth. He is merciful to us in Christ even though we are undeserving of that

love. He is a God of truth, integrity and uprightness and can never change. Live in that comfort and assurance and praise Him then with your whole heart. Sing Psalter 381:1.

#### **May 28** Read Philippians 4:4-7

**Psalm 138:3** Prayer is a wonderful gift of God. It is the chief part of true thankfulness which God requires of us. Some prayers are joyful expressions of praise. Others are words which can scarcely be uttered from trembling lips and broken hearts. The psalmist states that he cried to the Lord and was answered with strength to his soul. No, the Lord will not always give us the desires that we as humans feel we should have. But He will give to us peace and strength in our souls amid our trials even as He said to the apostle Paul, "My grace is sufficient for thee." Today we are called to attend God's house of prayer. Do so with a prayer in your soul, a song in your heart, and a mind ready to receive God's Word. Sing Psalter 381:2.

#### **May 29** Read Psalm 72:8-11

**Psalm 138:4 & 5** Those who praise the Lord and sing of His glory are not limited to one class of people. In our verses for today we read of the kings of the earth who engage in this holy practice. If we look at the various rulers in the world today, we don't see much evidence that they are God-fearing and sincere in praising Him. But there have been many kings in the history of the world who served the Lord. We also read about earthly kings who pay homage to God in Psalms 68, 72 and 102. God's praises can be heard from the youngest child to the most aged saint. They can be heard from the lowest servant to the highest ruler. The one thing that they all have in common is the Holy Spirit working faith in their hearts. Do you, dear reader, possess this faith? Then you can't help but praise Him, and He will be glorified. Sing Psalter 381:1 & 2.

#### **May 30** Read Ephesians 4:1-6

**Psalm 138:6** What is your status in life, dear reader? Do you rate yourself as lowly, or do you perhaps upgrade this status a bit and consider yourself higher up on the scale? Our verse today tells us that although God is transcendent in the highest glory, yet he has respect to the humble and lowly. In contrast, He is far from the proud, although He knows their evil ways afar off. By nature we are proud and haughty. But thanks be to Him, we are made lowly by His regenerating Spirit in our hearts. We realize our wretched condition and pray, "God be merciful to me a sinner." Our Savior was the very epitome of this virtue for He said, "Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls." (Matt. 11:29) Let us seek for that rest by humbling ourselves under His mighty hand. Sing Psalter 381:3.

#### **May 31** Read Philippians 1:1-6

**Psalm 138:7 & 8** This psalm closes with a statement of utter confidence in the Lord's work. If the Lord in His wisdom has begun to work grace in the heart of a person, it is impossible that He will not complete it. He cannot deny Himself. Because of His everlasting mercy, He will never forsake the works of His own hands. We read in Psalm 27 that even if our father or mother should forsake us, then the Lord will take us up. Do you have that assurance? Do you desire to have your sins forgiven? Do you love God's Word? Do you strive to live a Godly life in the midst of a sinful world? Even though we have only a small beginning of that new obedience in our hearts, rest assured that it is God's work and He will surely save us. All glory to His name! Sing Psalter 381:4.

# Psalter 245— The Lord Our Dwelling-Place

by Susan Adams

**T**his beautiful Psalter number is paraphrased from the first part of the familiar, somber Psalm 90. It was written by Moses during the forty-year period when the Israelites were wandering in the wilderness. It is a prayer of Moses for the nation of Israel, a petition that God remember and bless them.

The song begins by calling on the Lord as our dwelling-place. What a comfort to remember that God is a secure home and refuge for us! He preserves His people all through our own lives and throughout history. He was God even before creation, beyond the conception of our finite minds. He revealed Himself to Moses and Israel as Jehovah, the unchanging “I am.” As our Savior in the New Dispensation, He is the same, yesterday, today, and forever. (Hebrews 13:8)

The second verse reminds us that man’s life is in God’s hand. In contrast to God’s eternity, our lives are very brief. Moses as one of the oldest in the nation (he was 80 when the Israelites left Egypt) was a witness to the passing of generations.

This year we mark the passing of a thousand years and the world celebrates the achievements of man. How small this is in the sight of the eternal God!

Verse three also speaks of man’s frailty and brevity. His life is like a breath, a passing dream. The Bible often compares man’s life to grass, which grows up and soon withers under the sun and wind. We so easily forget in times of health and prosperity how frail we really are, how in a few moments our life could be taken away.

In the fourth verse Moses focuses on the condemnation of Israel. God can see right into man’s heart and knows every secret sin. The people had turned from God’s promises and had not had faith that they could conquer the Canaanites, so God condemned the whole older generation to die without seeing the promised land. They were experiencing His wrath on their sin as they wandered for years as pilgrims in the wilderness.

This Psalter ends on a sobering note. The lifespan of one man is maybe 70 or 80 years, lived in sorrow and toil, and he is soon taken away by death. We are so weak that we can’t even give God the reverence He is worthy of. The idea of God’s terrible wrath is often brushed aside in the church world today, but it is appropriate that we have a true fear of God and love Him with awe.

Although not versified in this song, the Psalm goes on to remind us to spend our short days in this world wisely. Moses prays that God would bless and establish the new generation of Israelites who would enter the

promised land. This Psalter gives us much to contemplate about our own frailty and brevity. As the Psalms say in another place, “What is man, that Thou art mindful of him?” It is a cause for lifelong praise and joy that God in His mercy has saved and loved us. ♦

**245 The Lord Our Dwelling-Place**  
PSALM 90 L. M. By CATHERINE Arranged by J. G. Walton

1. Lord, Thou hast been our dwell - ing - place Through all the  
2. All Thy con - ceit was false and lies And now - born  
3. Man soon yields up his best - ing breath He - here the  
4. Man in Thy an - ger is con - sumed, And in - tu  
5. For three-score years and ten we walk, Or four-score

a - ges of our time; Be - fore the mountains had their birth,  
gen - er - a - tions rise; A thousand years are passed a - way,  
well - ing tide of death; Like trans - ient sleep his sea - son pass,  
grief and sor - row dooeth; Be - fore Thy clear and search - ing sight  
years if strength be great; But grief and woe at - tend life's day.

Or - er - er Thou hastest forced the earth, From er - er - last - ing  
And all to Thee are but a day; Yes, like the watch - man  
His life is like the ten - der grass. Let - u - rant'neath the  
Our se - cret sins are brought to light; Be - neath Thy wrath we  
And soon our spir - its fly a - way; O who with true and

Thou art God, To er - er - last - ing our a - bode,  
at the night, With Thee the a - ges sing their right,  
morn - ing sun, And with - ereth ere the day is done,  
pine and die, Our life ex - pir - ing like a sigh,  
nev - 'rest thought! Canst Thou Thy an - ger at us sight?

*Susan is a member of First Protestant Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan.*

# Participating in Life-Endangering Sports

by Professor Dykstra

**T**his intended to be a debate within each discussion group. The first thing necessary in any debate is to define the main term.

Definition: Life-endangering sports are those physical activities that involve a high risk of injury or death which people do for the sake of the thrill of the activity. That in distinction from ordinary sports, where the primary reason for doing it is the physical exercise.

Some of the more obvious examples include auto racing, bungee jumping, parachuting, mountain climbing, swinging on trapezes, boxing, and activities that involve acrobatics that seem to threaten life and/or limb—on motor cycles, skate boards, etc. Others might add to this tackle football, skiing, going on roller coasters, or hunting.

Let us first of all seek to lay down some principles.

## **In general:**

- A. Participating in sports is a form of recreation. We ought first to determine what recreation is and why God gave it.
  - 1. Read Matthew 6:30-32. Was that a rest for the disciples? Why did they need it?
  - 2. The word *recreation* has the word *recreate* in it. That tells us the purpose of recreation—to take a break from the daily work or study to which God calls us, and to rest. Recreation should have as its goal therefore, to allow the person to relax, to be rejuvenated, SO THAT—he can take up the work God calls him to do renewed.
  - 3. I Timothy 4:4-5 teaches us how earthly things and activities can rightly be used. What does it mean?
- B. Notice that this is an area that involves Christian liberty. That is to say—the Bible does not give us direct answers to a question such as: Is it wrong to do this \_\_\_\_\_ (pick one of the activities listed above)? This does not mean that the Bible is no help—it certainly is! God gives us principles by which to live. Some of the principles related to this topic are given below.

## **Consider how each of these helps guide the believer in the matter of sports and recreation:**

- C. Tempting God is forbidden. (Matt. 4:7)
  - 1. The Devil told Jesus to throw himself off the pinnacle of the temple, assuring Jesus that God’s angels were watching over Him to keep Him, so that He would not even dash His foot against a stone. Jesus answer (quoting from Deut. 6:16), “*It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.*” (Matt. 4:7)
  - 2. What is it to tempt God? How would Jesus be tempting God if He cast Himself down from the tabernacle?
  - 3. How does this apply to life-threatening sports? Is this the sin of tempting God?
- D. Care of the physical body.
  - 1. Read the Heidelberg Catechism on the sixth commandment. What does it teach?
  - 2. Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit (I Cor. 6:19).
- E. The right goal of all the Christian’s activity:
  - 1. Do all to the glory of God. (I Cor. 10:31)
  - 2. Whatsoever is not of faith is sin. (Rom. 14:23)
  - 3. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself. (Mk 12:30)
- F. Stewardship of time and money.
  - 1. Some of these sports are not as dangerous as they appear—if a person has put many long hours into practicing. That raises the question of proper use of time and possibly money.
  - 2. God has given us our time, money and possessions. They are not ours to do with them as we please. We are only stewards of our time and possessions.
  - 3. “Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful”(I Cor. 4:2).

---

G. Wisdom.

1. Risking life or health is required in some instances—think of a policeman; think of a father protecting his family from a thief; think of David leading the armies of God into battle. There is also a certain amount of risk of injury in most sports. Where do we draw the line?
2. How can we distinguish between the activities that put us at risk, but are legitimate, and those which are not?
3. For example:
  - a. Driving the car to work, versus driving in a race.
  - b. Riding a motor cycle down a busy highway versus jumping a canyon on a cycle.

H. Christian liberty, again.

1. At the start we pointed out that this is an area of Christian liberty. Each believer must make a judgment, considering carefully the

risks of the various activities, evaluating his motives, and following the principles of the Bible. Then each one must decide which activities are wrong for him or her. Some activities so clearly violate the principles, that all Christians should agree. On others there may well be disagreement.

2. Make a list of the activities above. Start with the one that is the riskiest, and list them to the least dangerous, in your opinion. Then draw a line somewhere in the list so that all those above the line, you would not consider right for yourself, and below it, you are convinced that you may rightly participate. Be ready to defend your position.
3. A final issue is this: May the Christian be entertained by activities that he judges to be forbidden personally? Involved in that is paying money for others to put themselves into danger. ❖

---

# Love of Heavenly Treasures Or Love of Earthly Treasures

by Rev. Barry Gritters

**T**exts to have at hand: Matthew 6:19-24, 33; II Thessalonians 2:10-12; I Timothy 6:10ff; I John 2:15-17.

The heritage of the PRC young people is a call from the church to love and lay up heavenly treasures. If you study themes and discussions of past conventions, you'll see that this was a strong emphasis from the very beginning. This heritage is biblical heritage. The passages listed above are only a few of those that bring that calling to God's covenant people.

Why has this been an emphasis among us? First, because it's an emphasis the Scripture makes. But more, because every false teaching leads us to love the world more than heaven, and the world's treasures more than heaven's. And it's not only the false teaching of com-

mon grace that inclines us to earthly-mindedness, it's our own weak and sinful natures.

So work hard on this discussion. Prepare with this in mind: I want to help and be helped by the other young people to be heavenly minded, to love heavenly treasures. These are the treasures that will last, young people. That makes me think of what an elder told me recently: "I've never seen a U-Haul behind a hearse." Think about it.

I. What are Heavenly Treasures and Earthly Treasures?

- A. List some earthly treasures young people like to have (just list them here; discuss them later)
-

- 
- B. List some heavenly treasures (for example: the truth, godliness, communion of saints)

II. What does the Bible mean when it warns us not to *love* earthly treasures?

- A. It doesn't mean that it's wrong to HAVE earthly possessions, even many of them.
1. Prove that from both I Timothy 6:10 and the last part of that chapter.
  2. Is it wrong or unwise to work hard in order to *get* earthly possessions? (perhaps save this question until the end)
- B. The Bible warns against *loving* them, setting our hearts on them.
1. Consider each of these elements of love: (both for wrong things and proper things)
    - a. To make a conscious *decision* to set your heart on something (someone) (Deut 7:7)
    - b. To have a *passion* for that thing (or person) (see Ps 42:1; the OT word for love means "to breathe after")
    - c. To *sacrifice* yourself to get and enjoy that thing (or person) (think of John 3:16, etc).
    - d. To *serve* them, so that they direct our lives, guide us, rule us (see Matt 6:24).
  2. Now, go back and think of how *each* of these elements comes into play with earthly treasures. And discuss why the Bible warns against loving earthly things.
    - a. What earthly treasures have you decided to pursue?
    - b. How does your life show you have a passion for them?
    - c. What do you sacrifice in order to get them?
    - d. How do they direct your life?

III. The Lord calls His covenant people to love and have heavenly treasures.

- A. What does it mean to *love* heavenly things?
1. Set your *heart* on them
  2. Have a *passion* for them
  3. *Sacrifice* yourself (time, possessions, and life itself) to get and enjoy them
  4. *Serve* them so that they direct your life, guide you, rule you.

B. Questions:

1. Discuss what heavenly treasures you have, in light of the above four elements of love.
2. How can the child of God mature and make progress in loving heavenly treasures?

IV. The results of loving earthly treasures are devastating; loving heavenly treasures are blessed

- A. Loving earthly treasures is folly and ruin:
1. Discuss I John 2:17
  2. What we love becomes a *part* of us, our mind and will and heart. How can that be? (see I Corinthians 15:33; I Cor 10:20b; think of communion with *Christ*).
  3. What reason does Matt 6:21 give?
- B. Loving heavenly treasures:
1. What are the fruits we reap as we seek the kingdom of heaven?
  2. Is this incentive enough? Motivation is the key. What motivates you to seek and love heavenly treasures? (does Matt 6:33 give the answer?)

**Other questions for discussion:**

1. What should be the relation between work and pleasure/entertainment/leisure?
2. Compare how we (YP) use our *time* with how our parents and grandparents used their *time*? (keep in mind the caution of Ecclesiastes 7:10). How they used their *money*? Have things changed? What will the next generation be like?
3. How much money should young people give in their offerings? How much should they save? What percentage may be used for earthly things and entertainments? Are there rules that apply here? Guidelines?
4. What can we do to promote and encourage among ourselves that we seek spiritual things?
5. What comes first? Earthly *treasures* or earthly *hearts and minds*? What leads to what? (see Matthew 6:21: "will be"). Can it go both ways? If so, discuss the practical importance of that.
6. Discuss how Matt 6:33 can be the theme for the lives of all God's people (be careful to understand what "first" means). ❖

---

# The Importance of Our Reformed Creeds

by Rev. James Laning

A creed is a statement of faith that is officially adopted by a church or group of churches. It is an official declaration of what a church or group of churches believes to be the truth of the Word of God. When a group of churches adopts a creed, they are saying that this creed faithfully summarizes what the Scriptures teach.

We begin with a few brief questions that are not really *discussion* questions, but which should be answered before we continue.

1. What are our three main Reformed creeds?
2. Why were these creeds written?
3. Is our *Church Order* a creed?
4. Are the forms we use in the worship service, such as the Baptism Form, creeds?

## Why It Is Proper to Have Creeds

Creeds are looked down upon by many today. Apostatizing churches of many denominations are striving to unite against those who are preaching the Truth. To make this antichristian union possible, some of these churches have greatly abbreviated their creeds, trying to come up with a very bland confession to which almost anyone who calls himself a Christian could ascribe. In these churches little or no emphasis is placed on the creeds of the church, so that the majority of the people in these churches do not even know what the official position of their church is. This, however, does not bother most people, since doctrine today is seen as being of very little or no importance.

There are also many who have adopted the deceptive slogan, “We need no creed; we just need Christ.” Creeds, they say, are just the words of men; and all we need is Christ.

With these errors in mind, we consider the following questions:

1. Are our creeds the words of men?
2. Are our creeds infallible?
3. Why do we have creeds, seeing as the Bible contains all that we need to know?

4. Do our creeds cause unnecessary division in the church of Christ?
5. Do our creeds need to be updated, to fit with today’s world?

## Why It Is Important to Have Creeds

The following are some of the chief ways in which we benefit from having creeds. They are stated in the form of questions for discussion.

1. How do our creeds help us to understand God’s Word?
2. Why are our creeds a good means for instructing the youth in the church?
3. Why is it good to have a creed that clearly distinguishes our churches from those of other denominations?
4. How do our creeds help us to form sister-church relations with like-minded churches in other countries?
5. How do our creeds help us to preserve our understanding of the truth?
6. How do our creeds serve as a foundation for all future development of our understanding of the truth?

## Preaching the Heidelberg Catechism

We preach the Heidelberg Catechism in our churches, which means we preach a creed which our fathers adopted and to which we still hold today. Many condemn us for preaching a creed. They say this is preaching the word of man instead of the Word of God. But Reformed believers have rightly insisted that preaching the Heidelberg Catechism is preaching the Word of God. Our fathers have also pointed out that preaching a creed such as the Heidelberg Catechism is a very beneficial practice. For centuries it has been a great blessing to God’s people in Reformed churches.

It is important that we understand how to defend this practice, and why this practice is a great blessing to us.

- 
1. Do we preach a Scripture passage and then bring in the Catechism from time to time, or do we preach the Heidelberg Catechism itself?
  2. Why is preaching the Heidelberg Catechism preaching the Word of God?
  3. Why is the practice of preaching through the Heidelberg Catechism a good one?
  4. What are some other reasons why people speak against this practice?

### Concluding Questions

1. What would be wrong with joining together with all those who at least confess the Apostles' Creed?
2. There are other denominations in our own country that claim to hold to the same Reformed creeds that we do. Should we join with them?
3. How can we as young people make good use of our creeds? ❖

---

## Where We Stand

# Witnessing and Testifying of the Truth (2)

by Rev. Barrett Gritters

*Young People's Convention, Redlands, 1999.*

*In the last issue, Rev. Gritters pointed out in his convention speech that our witness well may include at least four topics: Creation, Death, Life, and What God Has Done For Me. In this next part of his speech, he explains the real advantages of this fourth subject of witness. Then, he points out practical advice for maturing in our ability to witness.*

### Advantages of this fourth approach

**R**ight here you can discuss Calvinism. You want to talk about the five points of Calvinism? Don't bring up TULIP all by itself. Talk about what God's done for you, a *depraved* sinner. Election? Talk about what God's done for you: you didn't deserve to be *chosen*. You want to talk about grace, how powerful *grace* is? Talk about how God has changed you, how He rescued you from the slimy pit and set your feet upon a rock. You want to talk about the *perseverance* of the saints? Talk about how you are absolutely convinced that once God got hold of you, He has promised He's never going to let you go. "What has God done for me?" gives you opportunity to talk about Calvinism, the sovereignty of God, the irresistibility of grace, the unconditionality of salvation from beginning to end!

The advantage of witnessing from that perspective is that we have opportunity to show meekness, humility. I think when we talk about creation we say, "I'm ready. I'm ready with all my big guns, and I'm going to blast these guys out of the water as fast as we can." That's not very meek. Life? "My life is full!" Death? "I'm not afraid of dying!" That doesn't sound humble. We must be meek when we talk about these things, but here is opportunity to have the meekness come out that needs to be in us. It must come out, guys, girls, or you're not going to get an inch in your witnessing to a person God puts in your path.

I want to tell you a little story about a neighbor that I grew up with, a Roman Catholic boy. I think we moved into the neighborhood when I was about eight years old, and the first thing he said to me after we became friends was, on a Saturday morning, "We're going to the movies! Can you come along?" Well, of course, I didn't want to say no right away; I wanted to blame it on Dad and Mom. So I went home and asked, and Dad and Mom said, "Well no, of course not." *Opportunity!*... "Barry!" he said, "I'm joining the Boy Scouts! Can you join with me?" Hmm. Dad and Mom said, "They take oaths. We don't make oaths when you don't need to make oaths." And in my weakness I just told him, "Dad and Mom said no." *Opportunities!* From the time I was eight until the time we were in college, we were friends. Then I

---

moved to Michigan. He became a Christian, converted to somewhat of the Reformed faith. In his work he flew out to Grand Rapids and visited me when I was in seminary. We talked a little while about the faith. He called himself a four-point Calvinist; he didn't believe in limited atonement. This is what he said to me. I'll never forget it. "Barry, all the time we were growing up, all the time we played together, in all the time we were friends together, I always believed that you thought you were going to heaven and I wasn't." And I cried. What meekness or personal interest in his soul had I shown? *Opportunity!*

All of our life long there are opportunities to speak about what God has done for me, and we've got to do it "with meekness and fear"! That's the text! That's the passage that Redlands chose as a theme. *Meekness!* "I'm no better than you, Mark! I'm just like you, Mark, and the only reason I'm a Christian is that God has come to me and made me that! Both you and I, Mark, need to repent and trust in Christ. And then both you and I, Mark, will be Christians, and you and I will go to heaven together." Talk about what God's done for you, who you are, what He's done in Christ, what you're doing to show yourself to be thankful to Him.

Third, the advantage of talking about what God has done for you is that *there's* proof of the existence of God. When you talk about witnessing you always talk

about, "Well, how can I prove to this unbeliever that God is there and that God made these worlds? How can I prove that Jesus Christ is alive?" Everyone always wants proofs. Proofs, proofs, proofs. And then usually, if you read the books about witnessing, you read books that have the proofs called the ontological proofs and the teleological proofs and all kinds of other philosophical proofs of the existence of God. Throw them all away, and let *this* be a proof of the existence of God: "God has done something for me, and I'm alive, and I love Him because He loves me, and I'm going to show in everything that I do that God is God. He lives in me. And there's One that was dead and is alive again, and I trust in Him, and I belong to Him, and I'm going to live with Him in the end." And all of the proofs of the existence of God go by the wayside, and the people in the world see in us that we believe and we trust and we love Him.

What are the four? One: Creation—Hebrews 11:3. Two: Death—I Corinthians 15. Three: Life—Psalm 73. Four: What has God done for me? And there opens up the whole of the doctrines of Calvinism: depravity, election, atonement, grace, and perseverance.

("Next time: Practical helps, and conclusions") ❖

---

*Rev. Gritters is pastor of Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church in Hudsonville, Michigan.*

---

Church History

# Early Church History— Gnosticism

by Rev. John A. Heys

*Reprinted from the December 1946 issue of Beacon Lights.*

**L**ast month we called your attention to the false doctrine of Ebionism which troubled the early New Testament Church. It was a mixture of some of the truths of Scripture together with the lies of Judaism, and it was an attempt on the part of the devil to destroy the Church from within by manufacturing a doctrine which would destroy the faith of the Jewish con-

verts. The elements of the truth were there to set the minds of the believers at ease, while the lies were there to destroy their faith in Christ.

The devil had more evil "up his sleeve" in order to destroy if it were possible the faith of the Gentile converts. He moved men to manufacture a false doctrine that would also befuddle the minds of the Gentile converts, if it were possible. It is the same old story of Paradise and man's fall. There the devil sought to confuse

---

Eve by making her question God's Word. Here again in the early New Testament Church, the devil, as it were, showers philosophies and carnal ideas about the truth, mixing a little of the truth with a host of lies and appealing to man's emotions and reason in order to cause him to reject God's Word and embrace man's lie. Such a finished product of the devil's ingenuity and man's folly is Gnosticism.

Gnosticism was not really something new. Even as Ebionism was a mixture of the truth and the wrong ideas of the Jews in regard to Christ, His kingdom and their salvation, so too Gnosticism is a mixture of the truth with Pagan or heathen mythology, mysteryology and philosophy. Its appeal was directed especially toward the Gentiles, as we said above. It gathered much of its heathen philosopher Plato for whom the Gentile world had very much respect.

Gnosticism was dualistic, that is, it believed in a power outside and next to God. It was also rationalistic in that it presented God as the unknowable one. This is a denial of God's revelation. God would be the unknowable one were it not for the fact that He revealed Himself to us in His Word. We could never know God were it not for this revelation. He is indeed the Incomprehensible One, that is, we cannot fathom Him, but because He reveals Himself to us in His Word, we may not call Him the unknowable one. Gnosticism in its deceptiveness does claim to believe in the Scriptures wherein God revealed Himself, but it places Scripture on the same level with the writings of heathen philosophers. Thus it makes Scripture nothing more than the ideas of certain men about God, rather than God's own self revelation.

---

Gnosticism in its deceptiveness does claim to believe in the Scriptures wherein God revealed Himself, but it places Scripture on the same level with the writings of heathen philosophers.

---

Further, it taught that the world and all matter is evil in itself. God did not create matter and the world. It was formed by another god, and mind you, this god, according to some Gnostics was Jehovah, the God of the Old Testament. From the most powerful God flows forth certain attributes and powers of His nature which Gnostics called aeons. The most perfect of these aeons was Christ. The weakest and least of these aeons was sent to redeem man from evil. This weakest aeon is called the Demiurge and is identified by the Gnostics as Jehovah, the God of the Old Testament. He created the world as the first step in man's redemption. He failed to realize redemption however. Therefore now the most perfect aeon, Christ, must come and save us.

Salvation is the deliverance from matter, which, as we said, is evil in itself. Redemption consists in the conquering and exclusion of matter. This is accomplished through knowledge and asceticism. (Gnosticism gets its name from the fact that it believes in salvation through knowledge. The Greek word for knowledge is "gnosis", hence the word "Gnosticism"). Professor Kurtz in his church history book correctly states that redemption according to the Gnostic is a chemical rather than an ethical process.

## HELP WANTED

*Would you like to get involved in the publication of Beacon Lights? We are looking for some reliable help with mailing, proof reading, subscription managing, and good ideas. You will not be required to do any writing but you are always welcomed to make a writing contribution. No experience is necessary. We meet once a month for about an hour for the regular Beacon Lights meeting. If you have any questions please call either Beth De Vries (616) 735-9001 or Mike Feenstra (616) 531-2349. Thanks for your prayerful consideration.*

Beacon Lights Staff

---

Perhaps you think within yourself that this doctrine is so mystical and mythological that it could hardly be considered as a serious threat to the truth. Its folly is so obvious that one who confesses faith in Christ surely is not tempted by such a heathen philosophy. But do not forget that this heresy was taught in the early New Testament Church and not in the twentieth century. It has no appeal to us, but to the Gentiles who had been brought up and steeped in pagan mythology, mysticism, and worldly philosophy there was a very strong appeal for the carnal nature. The devil knows how to adapt his tactics, to the time and place wherein God's people live in order to try to seduce them.

The Church was sorely pressed on every side by an increase of these heresies, and as we wrote before, it was this Gnosticism which Tertullian fought with all that was in him. The devil is cunning and sly. But Christ now had dominion over all things, the devil included, and He saved the church in that day and preserved the truth for us in this day and age. The gates of hell cannot prevail against Christ's kingdom. ❖

---

*The late Rev. Heys was a minister in the Protestant Reformed Churches from 1941 to 1980.*

---

# The State Reformed Church Of Hoogmade

by J.P. de Klerk

In the Dutch province of Zuid-Holland, East of the city of Leiden, you find the village Hoogmade. This is part of the town Roelofarendsveen, alongside the river Heimanswetering, which forms a connection between the Old Rhine and the Brasemer lake. This is all low lying land. The State Reformed Church was built in 1529, but deteriorated and had to be broken down to the foundations, then completely built up again following the old drawings. What you see in the photo is the church as it was at the reopening day, May 14, 1730, by Professor Franciscus Fabricius, who was a famous Reformed theologian at the University of Leiden.

❖

---

*J.P. de Klerk is an author and journalist from Ashhurst, New Zealand.*





*The lines are fallen  
unto me in  
pleasant places:  
yea, I have a  
goodly heritage.*

## 75TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION COMMITTEE

The 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration is just a few months away and we have over 1,100 individuals attending from all over the country and world. Are you one of those planning to attend?

The celebration will bring us many activities one of which we will need your support. During the week of the celebration we will be collecting, D.V., items to send to Myanmar. As you are packing for the convention we would like you to prayerfully consider bringing along some items to donate to the saints in Myanmar. There will be a collection box at the registration and a drop off area at the beginning of the week.

During the week there will be a designated time each day for any interested individuals to help pack the donations. The packed boxes will be sent to the Rev. Kortering's home in Singapore for storage. The Korterings will then be able to deliver the donated items in suitcases with people entering Myanmar. Since Myanmar is under an oppressive government it is impossible to safely ship directly to their country. Although this may seem like a complicated, lengthy process, it is one of the few ways to guarantee the donations will be used by those for whom they are intended.

Please read the list carefully, keeping several things in mind. First, it is extremely important that NO medications contain ibuprofen, since many of the Asian race are allergic to it. Secondly, unfortunately, no used clothing may be sent since the government has a law banning used clothing from entering the country. Third, socks are not needed because it is a hot climate and most people wear sandals. Fourth, the people must walk some distance for bathing and find it difficult to carry large bottles and tubes. Finally, any money collected for this cause will be used to pay for the shipping of the donations. If there is money left over, this money will be spent at the International Aid store in which additional items will be purchased and added to the boxed donations. Also, for those who are not attending the celebration, contributions are still welcome. We ask that you send your contribution to David Ondersma at 3521 N Lakeshore Drive Holland, MI 49424, c/o Myanmar. Checks can be written to Protestant Reformed Churches of America.

Thank you for prayerfully considering helping the saints in a country that does not allow its citizens the freedoms we enjoy by the grace of God.

The following items are some suggestions of things to donate:

Vitamins-children and adults	Bar soap
Tylenol	Shampoo (small bottles)
Pepto-Bismol	Baby powder
Diarrhea Medicine-children and adults	Bath towels (light weight)
Antiseptic cream	Paper-writing tablets of any kind
Band-Aids	Crayons
Toothbrushes-children and adults	Ball point pens
Toothpaste (small tubes)	Small children's toys

Even though the registration deadline has past, by sending in your registration form *immediately* you can still reserve your place. We do ask everyone who plans to attend the Celebration to fill out a registration form so we can obtain an accurate count of those attending. Registration forms should be available in your churches or you may contact us at 1-800-527-8243 and request one.

# "LITTLE LIGHTS"

*... let it shine!*

by Connie Meyer

## Antithesis (3)

Father reached for his Bible. He was going to explain to Sally and me what kind of armor we needed. I thought Sally was kind of young to be a soldier, but I was ready to be one!

"Let's see," Father flipped through the pages, "here it is in Ephesians 6. The war is 'not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.' The war is spiritual! If I would give you a shield made of brass and a sword made of steel, it would not help you at all. But a *breastplate of righteousness*, a *shield of faith*, a *helmet of salvation*, and *the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God*—these are some of the real pieces of armor you must have in order to fight in this war."

I looked at Sally. Not only did she seem kind of young to be a soldier, maybe I was not as ready as I thought, either. I shook my head. "Are you sure we're old enough for this?" I asked.

"Oh yes," Father answered with a nod, "even Scripture says, 'Little children.' Little children, fathers, young men—'Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.' That's the war we're in. We must love *not* the world, and instead we *must* love God and

the truth of God, and—" he paused and looked at us, "our brothers and sisters."

I didn't say anything. All I could do was wonder. How would we put this armor on? And how would we use it to fight? Loving the right things is so difficult to do! Father could see the questions in my eyes.

"Yes, we must be in this spiritual battle our whole life long, young to old. But Christ has already won the victory, and because we belong to Him—we have the victory, too." ♦

---

*Connie is the mother of 5 children and a member of Hope Protestant Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan.*



### Puzzle

Look up I John 2.

What verse in this chapter was quoted in its entirety in the story above? \_\_\_\_

What verse begins with the words, "My little children..."? \_\_\_\_

What verse speaks to little children about many antichrists? \_\_\_\_

What verse says he is a liar who keeps not God's commandments? \_\_\_\_

What verse says to little children, "abide in him"? \_\_\_\_

Add up the numbers. Your total should match the total number of books in the Bible: \_\_\_\_

## BEACON LIGHTS

P.O. BOX 375  
Jenison, MI 49428

Periodical  
Postage  
paid at  
Jenison, MI  
(UPSS046-840)

## Church News

### BAPTISMS

*“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.”*  
*Mark 16:16*

**The sacrament of Holy Baptism was administered to:**

Annika, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Doug Brands—Edgerton,  
MN

Elise Bernae, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Dean Boven—  
Grandville, MI

Emily Elizabeth, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Dale Vink—  
Grandville, MI

Joel Robert, son of Mr. & Mrs. Tom Pastoor—Holland, MI  
Joseph David, son of Mr. & Mrs. David Overway—Hope,  
MI

Hanna Elizabeth, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Bill Atwood—  
Southeast, MI

Michael Melvin, son of Mr. & Mrs. Brian VanFarowe—  
Southeast, MI

Titus Brett, son of Mr. & Mrs. Jonathan Langerak—  
Southwest, MI

### CONFESSIONS OF FAITH

*“...and with the mouth confession is made unto  
salvation.”*

*Romans 10:10*

**Public profession of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ was  
made by:**

Heather Velting—Byron Center, MI

Chris VanGinkel—Doon, IA

Sarah VanTil—Grandville, MI

Andy Baas—Grandville, MI

Ruth Veldman—Grandville, MI

Gaylene Wierenga—Lacombe, Canada

### MARRIAGES

*“...and they twain shall be one flesh.”*

*Matthew 19:5*

**United in the bonds of Holy Matrimony were:**

Mr. Scott VanUffelen and Miss Heidi Pastoor—Faith, MI