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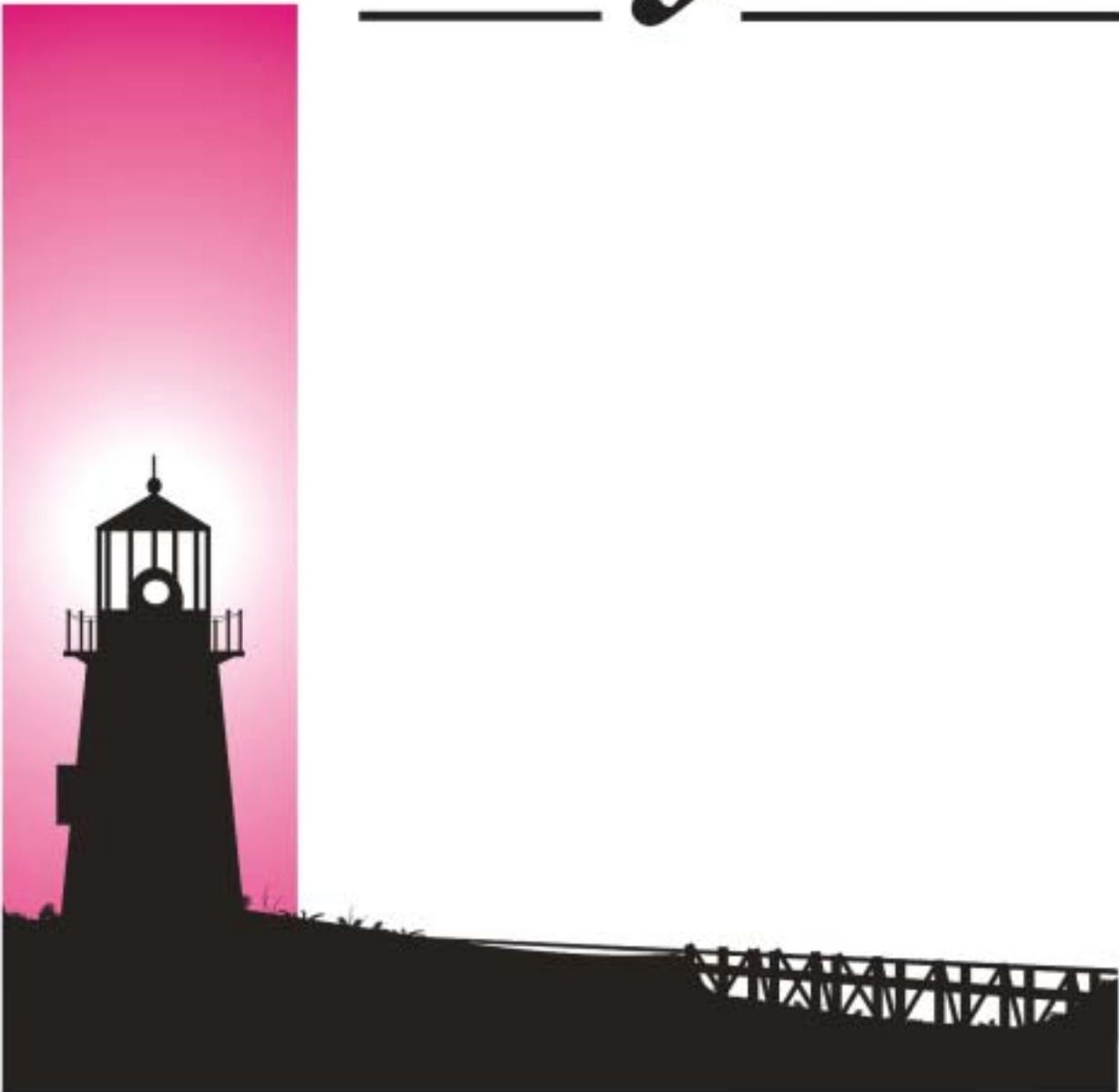


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Wars and Rumors of War

by John Huizenga



As I sat down to begin writing this article, the news media was bringing us rumors of war. Perhaps, by the time you read this, our country will be at war. We had been attacked by terrorists, the World Trade Center lay in ruins, thousands of rescue workers were digging through the tons of rubble, and the nation was reeling in despair, anger, and fear. Most of the TV and radio time was being spent bringing us the terrible news and analysis of what had happened. Classis called our churches together for a time of prayer. Each of us will live the rest of our days with the terrible images seared into our brains.

As a young child and teenager I remember the dark cloud of possible nuclear war hanging overhead. The rumors of war were frightening and made me wonder what was going to happen. Would I have to go to war? Would loved ones be killed? Would the life I knew be forever changed? Would I die before I had a chance to grow up, marry, and have a family? Would glowing clouds of radiation throw this world into chaos and leave me sick or begging for food? Would Christ return before I had a chance to enjoy the “good” things this life has to offer?

Perhaps the image of those mighty towers in the center of beautiful Manhattan burning, crumbling, and pouring down upon the streets and people below made you think similar thoughts. Perhaps the talk of war and more attacks by terrorists made you worry the same worries. Perhaps the hope expressed by many in the world for someone who can unite the cultures of East and West made real in your heart the possibility of Antichrist coming in our life time. God has shown war and rumors of war to our parents and grandparents, and the people of God through all ages and we can be certain that they too had similar thoughts and feelings.

Our flesh desires peace on this earth. We are surrounded by hopes of prosperity and the “good life.” We too are easily caught up with the same worldly goals. Anything that threatens this life that we enjoy instantly stirs up our natural flesh to fear, anger, and questions. Our President has directed Americans to look beyond to the day when the evil of terrorism has been eradicated and peace reigns. Is this your hope and comfort? I hope not. Peace apart from Christ is the short-lived peace of Antichrist.

Where then do we find peace at a time like this? First we need to confess before God the weakness of our sinful flesh and our own lack of faith. So often we view the things that God gives to us in this life and our life itself as our goal rather than a means whereby God leads us to covenant life in heaven. Whenever our life, hopes, and goals become disrupted or threatened, we quickly fret and fail to realize that God gives and He takes away in accordance with His perfect plan of salvation. May we pray for grace that our faith be strengthened, that we might be content with what the Lord gives, that we might truly long for the return of Christ, and that we might have peace knowing that God works all things for our salvation.

The only true peace, the peace that passes all understanding is rooted in a certain and true knowledge of God’s word - wisdom. Proverbs 3:15-18 “Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.” This world is filled with violence and there will never be peace here. Peace on this earth is not

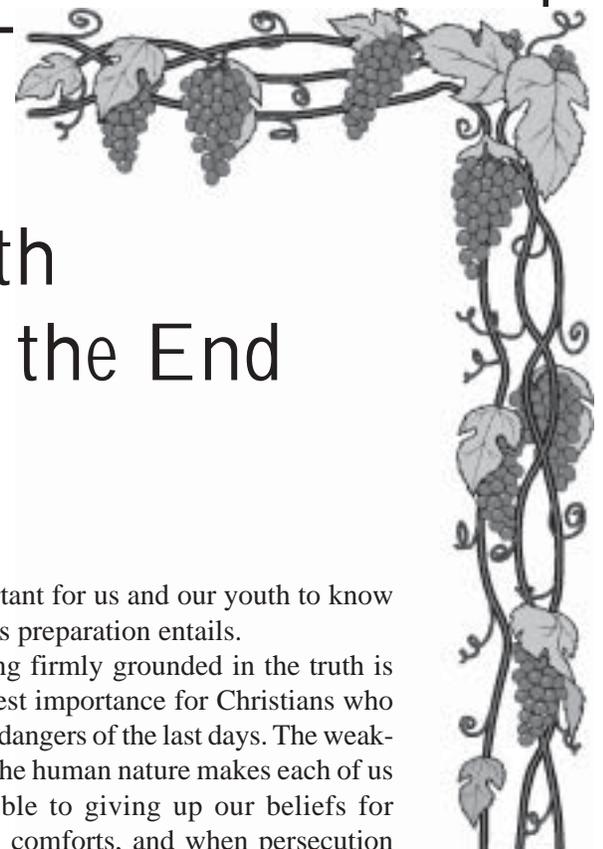
our goal. This life is the means whereby God prepares us for heavenly life. The wars and tribulation of this life all point to Christ who has delivered us from the horrible pit of sin we dig. We have been redeemed in Christ, but any peace that we have on earth is but a foretaste of the perfect peace of heaven. Our peace is rooted in wisdom: a true knowledge of Christ.

We must seek wisdom diligently because we live in an age where the deception of Satan will be overwhelming. The world will try hard to convince the elect that peace on this earth is within reach of man himself. As we face these attempts at deception, we must remember that Christ also faced the same temptations when he was tempted of the devil in the wilderness. Let us give thanks to God for a faithful seminary and faithful ministers of God's word to guide us in a time like this. May we also prepare diligently for society and establish a regular routine for meditation upon God's word.

For a time Satan, through the instrument of Antichrist, will indeed attain to an earthly semblance of peace. We will be able to see the proposal for peace even as Jesus our Lord saw it when He was tempted of Satan. Satan showed Jesus a way to victory by bowing down to Satan instead of going to the cross. Man's way – the devil's way, is the way of peace through human wisdom. It is a peace that pushes God out of the way. It is the way that excites our flesh and causes little pain or suffering. We must be ready to submit to the Lord's will of the way of suffering, redemption, and reconciliation in Christ. The world's path to peace leads to eternal suffering in hell.

The words of comfort that Jesus spoke to his disciples before he was arrested and crucified are also words of comfort for us as we live in the days leading to his return. "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." John 14:27 ❖

Fruitful Branches



Preparing Youth for Standing Firm to the End

by Michelle Key

PR Scholarship Essay.

“**T**his know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come” (II Timothy 3: 1). Our youth are taught the signs of the times that are laid out for us in passages such as Matthew 24 and know that wars, natural disasters, persecution, and apostasy must increase before the return of our Lord. We are called to be ready for His return (Matthew 24:44), and it

is important for us and our youth to know what this preparation entails.

Being firmly grounded in the truth is of greatest importance for Christians who face the dangers of the last days. The weakness of the human nature makes each of us susceptible to giving up our beliefs for physical comforts, and when persecution

arises we may be afraid to stand firm in God's truths until the end. The only way to combat this weakness is when we, through the strength of Christ, know what we believe, are assured of the salvation given to us, and hold fast to the gospel in faith and love (II Timothy 1:12, 13). In order to hold fast to the truths of the Scriptures we must "be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might" (Ephesians 6:10). Paul uses the figure of a soldier to show the Ephesians that they need to be properly equipped for battle. A soldier must be properly protected from danger. We fight a spiritual battle and must also be protected by learning to completely trust God and stand on His Word. A soldier does not go out to battle without knowing the strengths and weaknesses of his opponent, or without being aware of the methods which may be employed against him. We also need to search the Scriptures to learn how the devil plans to attack us. Passages such as Matthew 24, Mark 13, and II Timothy 3 tell us of the signs of the times and warn about the apostasy and persecution that will occur to try to make God's people stumble.

The apostle Paul faced many persecutions because of the gospel which he held to. He tells the Thessalonians that his preaching was done with a proper motive because, even after much suffering, he was "bold in [his] God to speak unto [them] the gospel of God" (I Thessalonians 2:1, 2). If he had not had a proper motive he probably would not have continued preaching God's Word in the face of all the dangers around him. Likewise, unless we are firm in our faith and know that what we believe is the truth, we will falter in times of persecution.

The importance of knowing the Scriptures has been held to in our Protestant Reformed churches and schools. Even our youngest children receive instruction in the home about God's faithfulness throughout all time. As our youth grow, they learn in greater detail about the doctrines and truths that our churches have learned from God's Word. As we approach the end times this knowledge remains important. In order to overcome the world we must have faith and believe that Jesus is the Son of God (I John 5:4, 5). Searching the Scriptures to learn the truth is of great importance. II Timothy 3:12ff warns us of persecution and deceivers, but we are urged to continue in the things we have been taught, knowing that "the holy scriptures... are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."

We need to teach our youth the importance of being firmly rooted in Christ. Jesus gave the illustration of

building a house on a rock, so that when strong winds came the house could not be shaken. Paul says in Ephesians 4 that believers work together as a body to strengthen each other in the knowledge of God, "that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sliight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they He in wait to deceive."

I John 4:1 teaches us to "believe not every spirit but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world." As we teach our youth about the end times and as they learn the doctrines of our Christian church, we must also encourage them to "try the spirits." They must not only try the spirits outside their own churches, but also try the things they have been taught, seeking not only to know *what* they believe, but also perceiving *why* they have the beliefs they do. When they understand why they have these beliefs, our youth will be able to live a life of faith that is not only what their parents and their church have taught them. They will also have an owned faith, a confidence that what they have been taught is without a doubt the truth of Scriptures. Such a faith is necessary in the end times in order to stand against the apostasy and persecutions that will undoubtedly come upon those who remain faithful to God.

In the face of the end times and the persecution that will occur, our youth must know the importance of perseverance and patience in adversity. Just as Jesus silently suffered and did not retaliate or threaten those who caused Him to suffer, our patient suffering is commendable in God's eyes (I Peter 2:19-24). In the next chapter, Peter says that those who suffer for Christ's sake are blessed. We must teach our youth so that they be not troubled and be ready always to give an answer concerning their fear of God and their lifestyle that makes them different from the world. We must teach them to patiently continue their godly conduct as witnesses to their oppressors.

The body of Christ must be strengthened to face the trials that it will meet and be reminded that the end is near. Our youth must realize that it is better to suffer for doing God's will than to suffer God's judgment for doing evil because "if we suffer, we shall also reign with him" (II Timothy 2:12). We must also show our youth that the Lord is mindful of His promises and will never forget His people, "so that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me" (Hebrews 13:5, 6). Teach them then to bear reproach

for Christ's sake, knowing that "here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come" (Hebrews 13:14). "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" when we focus on eternal things instead of the temporary sufferings (II Corinthians 4:17, 18).

Perseverance is made easier if we remind our youth that all God's people face the same perils. We must resist the devil, "knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world" (I Peter 5:9). We must teach our youth not to think only of their own sufferings, but to pray for and encourage God's people all over the world. Our fight against the devil includes "praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints" (Ephesians 6:19). Paul gave us an example to follow when he gave thanks to God for the patience of the Thessalonians in the persecution they faced, strengthening the church and encouraging them to continue in their walk with Christ (II Thessalonians). "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke unto

love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" (Hebrews 10:23-25).

We must impress upon our youth the importance of watching carefully and observing the signs that the end is near, "lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping" (Mark 13:35-37). They must know and understand the truths they profess that they may be strengthened and not falter in their faith when Satan will appear as an angel of light (II Corinthians 11:14). Turning to Christ in prayer, His people will obtain mercy and grace to be helped through the end times. When we teach our youth about the end times and as they grasp the importance of the truth of Scripture we can rest assured that nothing will separate them from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 8:39). If by God's grace they endure with patience and perseverance, doing the will of God, they will receive the promise of eternal life.



Michelle is a member of Hull Protestant Reformed Church in Hull, Iowa.

Story Time

The Fourth Man

A Story from the Time of the Afscheiding

by P. S. Kuiper

translated by Rev. Cornelius Hanko

Chapter 12

The "Careful" Deacon

(The last chapter told of the "conversion" of Ko Boelhouver at whose farm the wagon of four men returning home on a dark and stormy night had broken a

wheel. The four men had been chosen at a meeting in another town as elders and deacons of a new congregation in Hilversum. The congregation belonged to the Secession Churches which had left the apostate State Church to follow De Cock, Van Raalte, Scholte, etc. After helping the men to fix their broken wagon, Ko Boelhouver had talked with them into the early hours of the morning. He had, at last, been persuaded of the righ-

teousness of the Seceders' cause. The story now turns to the sad state of affairs in the apostate State Church. It depicts this sad state of affairs by describing a visit of a deacon to a poor family in the church which had asked for aid. The family was the Splint family which had just had a new baby. The events surrounding the birth of that baby were described in an earlier chapter. This is perhaps a good place to mention that the differences between the rich and the poor in The Netherlands were very great. Although all belonged to the State Church and often to the same congregation, the rich farmers lived in luxury while the poor workers could not earn enough to feed their families. I have often talked with many who came from The Netherlands and who knew only extreme poverty. My own grandmother spoke of working for a rich farmer, having to carry heavy pails of water up three flights of stairs when she was only ten, and going to bed at night with severe cramps in her stomach because she did not have enough to eat. Nor could these poor send their children to school because the children had to go out to work at an early age to earn a few pennies for food. The people of the Secession were usually from this poor class in The Netherlands.)

Saturday evening of the same week had arrived. In the small house of Evert Splint mother and the girls were doing a bit of spinning, while Krijntje played in the gutter water that poured past the door. That gutter water had a pretty red tint, because a neighboring butcher had poured his waste water into it. Koen lay on his stomach looking at the sleeping Barentje, the new baby, while Splint himself sat at the table cleaning his pipe.

Suddenly the faint light of a dying evening that still shone through the small window was darkened by a large shadow. Splint looked up and saw to his amazement Jacob Bollebakker standing at the door. "There is father Jacob, our deacon. Now we shall hear it," he mumbled. There was a small tap on the door and the fat deacon entered the room before anyone could come. "Good evening, folks," he greeted them affably. Without asking, he took a chair, turned it around, and sat down so that his knees were toward the back of the chair. In this position he looked boldly around the small room.

"Be sure to do your duty well," he said with a fat grin to the girls who were spinning. "You remind me of an edifying poem I read in the paper this morning:

*Girls, let us diligently strive
Daily to make advancement.
Work is the manner in which we arrive
To all sorts of pleasure and enjoyment."*

Fortunately the deacon did not see that the sassy Antje stuck out her tongue behind his back, to the secret pleasure of the other children.

"Sad to say, your kind has never learned to read," continued the farmer, irritated because his oratorical ability made so little impression.

"Our Koen goes to the truant school." Splint remarked stiffly.¹

"A nonsensical institution," was the deacon's response. "A waste of the community's resources, while the government neglects the farmers."

"How is it going in your business?"² asked Koen after an unpleasant silence.

"Very bad," sighed Bollebakker, taking an expensive cigar out of his pocket. "The winter rye suffered severely from the frost and the cows have eaten my ears from my head. Your sort has no idea of the cares of a farmer." He took his flintbox, coaxed up a flame, and complacently lit his cigar.

"We have our own cares, Bollebakker." Splint's voice was sharp.

"Ye-ess, they seem to be serious, as I noted from your letter. I was surprised that anyone of your sort could write such a fine letter."

"Someone helped me with it," he answered, controlling himself with difficulty.

"And who could that be?" the farmer asked inquisitively.

"That to my mind makes no difference," answered Splint, who did not want to mention the name of school-teacher, Van Oostveen.

Bollebakker was deeply offended, but could not quickly come up with a proper retort. At last, he took out pencil and paper, blew a cloud of smoke in the direction of Barentje and cleared his throat.

"Tell me now, how much money is taken in each week," he said in a fatherly tone. Splint took a deep breath and started.

"I work for Elbert Peet as black weaver from six o'clock in the morning until seven o'clock in the evening with a half hour for meals, and on Saturday from six to twelve, thus a total of 66 hours per week. I earn six guilders³ a week."

"A good wage and a good boss," the deacon broke in. To which Splint offered no comment.

“My wife Sijtje,” he continued, “spins about twelve hours a day and earns about a half crown⁴ per week.”

Bollebakker placed his pencil behind his ear. “What are you telling me? She works only twelve hours a day? Man, I know women who manage seventeen hours a day. Evidently she must chat quite often with her neighbors?” Splint turned pale, his wife bowed her head and secretly wiped a tear from her eye.

“My wife is physically not strong. It is difficult for her to work even twelve hours, Bollebakker.”

“Yes, I suppose so, and what do the children earn?”

“My children earn by spinning about twenty pennies a week. This is also true of our Koen, who sits behind the spinning wheel by Reins Nieuwenhuizen.”

“What else?” asked the deacon, constantly writing and figuring.

“That’s all, Bollebakker. From this money we have to pay the rent and buy food, clothes, fuel, everything.”

With great ceremony Bollebakker stowed away his pencil and paper and leaned heavily against the back of the chair, which creaked in protest. He drew deeply on his cigar and motioned with his head toward the window.

“How old is that little fellow outside?”

“Evidently you mean Krijntje,” answered Splint sharply, “He is five and we are thankful every day that the Lord is with him for he has poor health.”

“Just leave that pious language to me, man,” the deacon answered, irritated by Splint’s mention of the Lord.

“You folks think that you can continue to receive a small handout from the deacons, but I have a much better plan. Your boss Elbert Peet is a good friend of mine. We have a good understanding between us. Discussing the matter with him, I made the following plan: A child of five years can very well go to work. Therefore you must take him to the weaving mill next Monday where he can learn to spool. The first three months he will earn 2½ cents plus a sandwich, and if he does his best, later Elbert will let him earn 30 cents.”

Motionless, Evert Splint stared ahead of him; his wife and daughters had ceased spinning. Then Splint slowly said, stressing each word, “Our Krijntje is not going to the weaving mill of Elbert Peet.”

In amazement the farmer dropped his cigar. “So you reject this generous decision of the church?” he asked threateningly.

Splint fought off his rising anger. “I thought the church was called to show mercy,” he shouted hoarsely.

Bollebakker picked up his cigar and answered in an unctuous tone, “Certainly, good friend, but, as the Ordination Form states, they must show mercy ‘with carefulness.’ I cannot emphasize that sufficiently.”

In his excitement Splint had stood up. “If our little boy with his weak lungs comes in that dusty, dirty weaving mill of Elbert Peet, we will soon bring him to the cemetery!”

“Be sure to weigh your words more carefully when you are talking about your boss! And don’t become dramatic about it. It is merely a matter of becoming accustomed to the mill. If we listened to talk like yours, the diaconate would soon go broke.”

“Unless the richer members dropped a bit more in the collection,” came the bitter response.

The farmer knew that this was obviously directed at him, for he jumped up, angry as a spider.

“Just let your lazy wife spin a bit longer,” he snorted.

Now Splint placed himself directly in front of him and said with a hoarse voice, “Bollebakker, leave my house at once!”

The deacon realized that he should not delay. With a face as white as a sheet he took big steps toward the door, where he once more pompously turned about and said: “The church has now done its duty!”

He slammed the door behind him with a crash.

Outside “Father Jacob” again lit his cigar that had died out, and after drawing a few times on the stub, he regained his composure. With that, he became very satisfied with himself and how he had conducted the visit. He walked home in the conviction that once again the church had been spared unnecessary expenses.

Of the blessedness of his office of deacon he had understood nothing at all.

¹ The reference here is obscure. The Dutch has *schoftschool*, and the meaning of *schoft* is rascal. There is no indication in the book that Koen was a truant. It may be that this was the only school this poor family could afford, although education was generally supported by the government, because the one church was the Reformed Church, and this church was itself supported by the government.

² Bollebaker was, of course, himself a farmer.

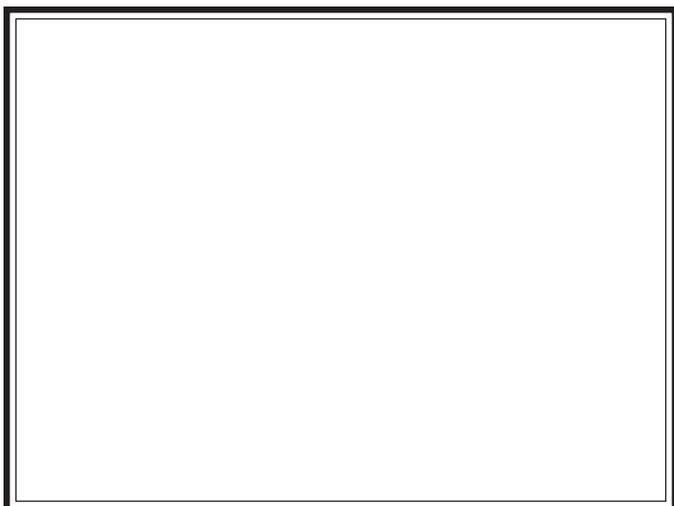
³ Roughly equivalent to our dollar.

⁴ About one-half a dollar. ❖

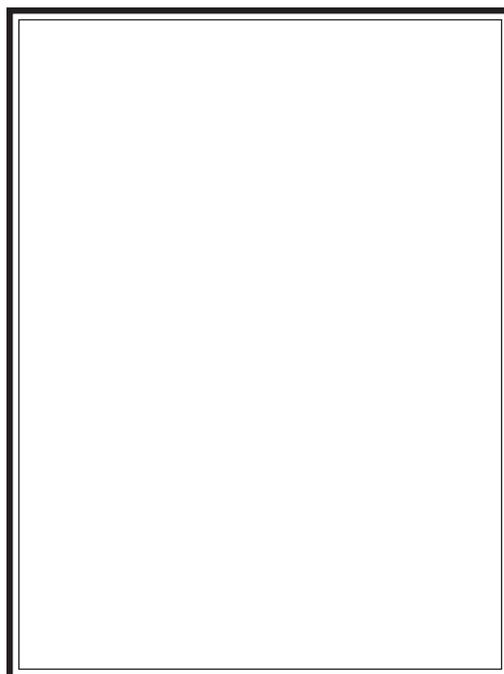
2001 PRYP Convention Pictures



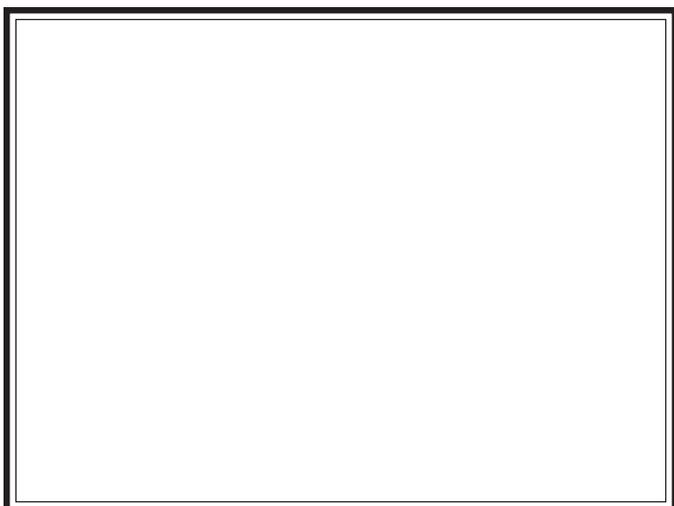
All speeches were held in the beautiful Bolthouse Chapel.



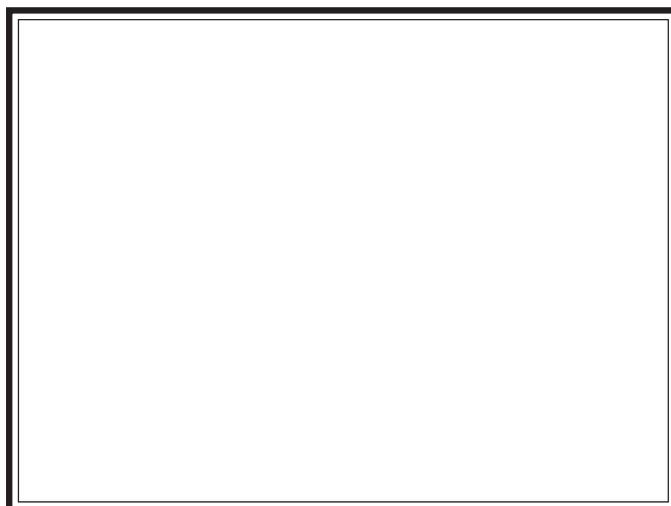
Rev. Eriks addressed us on the topic "Guiding Us into the Harbor of Salvation."



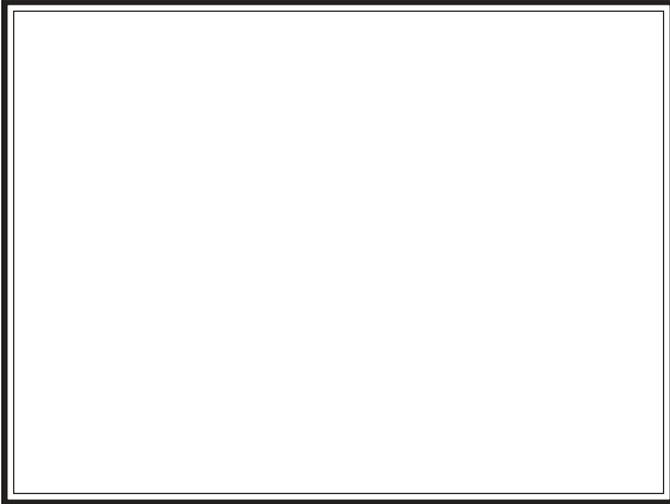
Rachel takes the plunge in the bog.



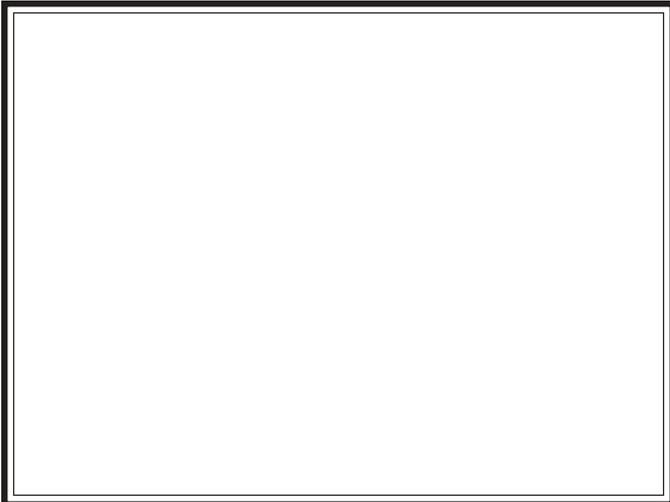
The drizzle didn't dampen spirits as we entered Park Place for the Banquet.



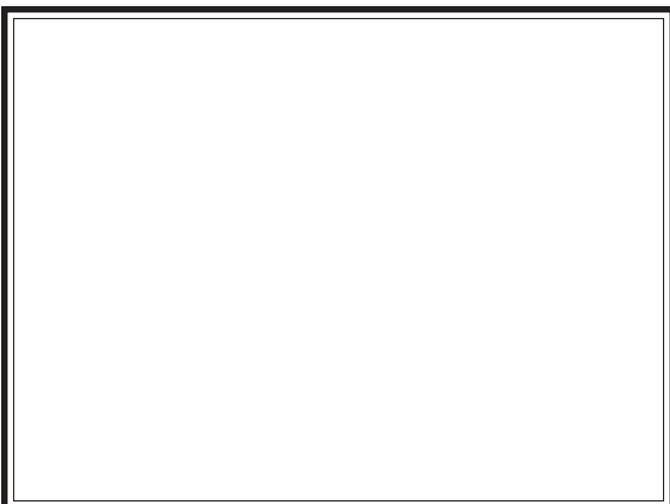
One of the favorite hangouts was the Snack Shop.



Enjoying an aggressive game of 4-way volleyball.



Two fun water challenges: The Blob and Ice Mountain.



The good news: we may be filthy but bacteria can't grow in the bog!

Shorten Those Days

by Thelma Westra

***T**he Scripture speaks to us
Of many tribulations
In final days the Lord
Pours out upon all nations.*

***T**hat time will soon be here!
We see the signs around,
When godliness and virtue
Are mocked, and sin abounds.*

***E**'en in this land of ours,
Supposedly so free,
There's tolerance for sin
But none for you and me.*

***P**ornography and filth
Are "freedom of expression,"
Although the Ten Commandments
Is a "dangerous confession!"*

***W**e pray for faith to stand
As evils much increase.
Though all around is war
Our hearts may rest in peace.*

***G**od promised for our sakes
Those days shall shortened be;
He'll give strength to His own
Till we our Savior see.*

Watching Daily At My Gates

by Skip Hunter

November 1 Read Genesis 50:1-6

At the death of his father Joseph makes plans to carry out his father's wishes. We might think that this might have been to bothersome to undertake. After all, he had to work through official channels to gain permission to leave Egypt. Joseph, even though he was second in power, was still a slave. What motivated him to do this for his father? True, he loved his father dearly, but it was more than this. Joseph believed in the promises of God. Joseph had respect towards God's covenant with his father. Joseph wished to follow his father's desires in order to carry out the symbolism involved. What about us? Today we do not have to carry out physical symbolism for the covenant. But do we spiritually seek that covenant for our children and our families? Do we carry out the demands of the covenant as we promised at baptism and public confession of faith? Young people, the consistory asks hard questions not to trick you, but rather to ascertain your desires toward the covenant of grace. What are your desires, parents and young people, all people of God? Are those desires toward the covenant of grace? Sing Psalter 289:1-4.

November 2 Read Genesis 50:7-14

Yesterday we saw how Joseph did not have the power to leave Egypt. Today we see that idea again. We might ask, "Why is God making them stay there?" The answer is simple. It was not time for them to leave. God was preparing His church for the land of Canaan. That preparation consisted of the 400 years in Egypt as well as the journey through the wilderness. This fact has spiritual significance for us. We, too, must abide in Egypt and make a journey through the wilderness of sin in order to reach the heavenly Canaan. We must patiently wait for God's time to leave this earth. But we must not make this spiritual Egypt our home. We must look unto the city which hath foundations, which is heavenly. Let us pray for the grace to abide on this earth looking for the heavenly Canaan. Sing Psalter 289:5-8.

November 3 Read Genesis 50:15-21

Joseph's brothers understandably had a fear. They were afraid that Joseph would use his earthly power and exact retribution for their sins. They properly cast themselves upon the mercy seat of God and asked for forgiveness. Joseph also did the right thing and forgave them and promised to aid both them and their children. What a lesson this is for us, people of God! First of all, we see the need to seek forgiveness when we have wronged someone. We do this not because we are afraid of their power. But rather we do this because it is commanded by God. Secondly, we forgive those who have trespassed against us. This is as God does for us. Let this be a guide and example for us when we sin one against another. Let us not hold grudges, but rather let us show true love for the brother. Sing Psalter 203.

November 4 Read Genesis 50:22-26

Joseph lived out the final days of his life in Egypt. We do not now what he did after the famine. However, we do know that he continue to live out of the covenant. He taught his children and grandchildren the ways of that covenant. And before he died, like his father, he exacted a promise from the people of God that they not leave his bones in Egypt. Joseph believed the promises of God that Israel would not stay in Egypt. He wanted his bones to finally rest in the picture of heaven, not in the picture of hell. Israel would have to stay in Egypt about three hundred more years. Joseph's bones would served as a reminder to them that they were just visitors and not at home in Egypt. This is what the Scriptures are to do for us. We are just visitors on this earth; our home is not here. Are we living as if this is not our eternal home, people of God? Sing Psalter 309.

November 5 Read Exodus 1:1-7

Almost three hundred years pass between the end of Genesis and the beginning of Exodus. What have the people of God been doing during this time. It seems that according to verse seven they had been following the command to Adam and Noah concerning "being fruitful and multiplying." They had been carrying out their covenant obligations to bear the covenant seed as God had commanded. This command is still in force today. God's desire for His people is that they be "fruitful and multiply." Is this our desire? Are our marriages consummated with the goal of bearing covenant children? Are we seeking to fill our quivers with as many covenant children as God has ordained for us? As we work our way through the book of Exodus, we will be finding out much of God's commands for the covenant nation of Israel. These commands are still to be followed by the covenant people of today. Sing Psalter 289:9-12.

November 6 Read Exodus 1:8-14

God protects His people through the means of earthly rulers. He also uses earthly rulers to carry out his plans for the good of His people. Sometimes it is hard to see what that good is. Here, Egypt begins to limit the size of covenant families. This evil is being officially practiced in some countries in the world today. Sad to say, some of God's people practice this policy. God will not bless His church when they willfully disobey Him. But He blesses them when they choose to "obey God rather than men." Egypt oppressed Israel greatly. This will be the lot of the church at the end of times. Let us pray for the grace to be sustained during those hard times even as we are sure faithful Israelites did. Sing Psalter 289:13-16.

November 7 Read Exodus 1:15-22

We see in this passage an act of faith, but also a testimony to the weakness of mankind. The midwives knew that it was wrong of them to kill the babies of Israel. They knew that under the covenant God had commanded covenant men and women to bring forth covenant children. Therefore, they refused to commit murder as they were commanded by Pharaoh. But their faith was weak as they lied

about what the reason for their actions. The word to us is clear. We must have faith to bring forth covenant seed even in these difficult times. We must also have faith to face those who would use human law against us when it is in conflict with God's law. This takes much grace. Let us pray for this grace as we look ahead to the hard times preceding the second coming of Christ. Sing Psalter 289:17-19.

November 8 Read Exodus 2:1-10

In those dark days in Egypt we see a shining example of faith. A man took a wife for himself and immediately they began to go about the calling of bearing covenant seed. We do not find out the name of this man or woman until later in the book. This is because the people themselves were not important, but their faith was to be highlighted. Amram and Jochebed did not worry about how they would bring up their children, but trusted that God would care for them and their three children. They believed that they must obey God rather than man. What about us? In these days, when financially it may seem that bringing forth covenant seed is not a good idea or even discouraged, do we turn our backs on the world's advices and put our trust in Jehovah? Do we trust Him to supply all of our needs in these days in which we may wonder if God has forgotten us? Let us pray for the faith and trust in God for that faith which is needed to obey Him at all times. Sing Psalter 319.

November 9 Read Exodus 2:11-22

The stories of Moses's birth, his being raised by Egypt's princess in the palace, and his futile effort to help a countryman, should be well-known by all of us. We should not only know them well, we should know that our children know them. For in these accounts we see salvation. Not the salvation that we might want, but rather the salvation found only in Jehovah. We see God's way for Amram and Jochebed was not the easy way but the way of faith. We see that Moses living in the palace was for the good of God's people as He led them through the wilderness. And we see Moses leaving Egypt for a time to be a message of patience for both Moses and us. We must wait on God's time for our salvation and for everything in our lives. Moses had to learn meekness. This could not be taught in Egypt. This had to be taught in the desert. Let us learn meekness and from meekness the way to our salvation. Sing Psalter 228.

November 10 Read Exodus 2:23-25

There is much to be learned from these three verses of Scripture. First of all, we see that God is in control of all government in all nations. Just when Israel thought it could get no worse the Pharaoh died and a worse one took the throne. This was, in God's council, the way in which they were to be delivered from Egypt. We may think that God was too harsh on His people. But this is never so. Our Father chastises those whom He loves. Secondly, in increasing their bondage the Israelites remembered God and turned to Him in prayer. If things are going too well for us, we tend to forget that all things come from our heavenly Father. He must turn us; we will never turn ourselves. Thirdly, we see that God hears the prayers of righteous people. God has pity upon His children and listens to their prayers. As we enter the house of prayer tomorrow, let us pray for deliverance not only from this world of sin, but also from the secret and personal sins which dwell within each one of us. Sing Psalter 295.

November 11 Read Exodus 3:1-6

For forty years Moses kept the flocks of Jethro. God allowed him the time to prepare himself for his role as Israel's deliverer. God also gave to him a wife and two sons. God was keeping Moses until

the day in which Israel was ready for a deliverer. That day was now. God came to Moses from a burning bush. Moses had to learn how to respect the presence of God. As we enter God's house today, do we respect His presence in that house? Did we prepare ourselves yesterday and this morning for our entrance before Jehovah's face? Does our clothing exhibit the respect and honor due to the holiness of God? Have we taken off our shoes figuratively before the Lord of heaven and earth? What is our posture in the house of God? How do we sing? How do we listen to the Word? Take off your shoes, people of God, and humble yourselves before the throne of the majestic covenant God. Sing Psalter 204.

November 12 Read Exodus 3:7-10

In these few verses we see the answer to Israel's and to Moses's prayers. Surely Moses had been praying for the people of God as he learned patience herding the sheep. Moses's impetuosity as he killed the Egyptian had to be checked. Moses had to learn that God's time and way is best. God was watching out for His people. As we continue our work in this week, is this our experience? Do we know that God watches over us as we work next to and for the wicked? Do we pray for deliverance from their unjustness? God cares for His people, of that there is no doubt. He will lead us unto the everlasting land which flows with milk and honey. Contemplate these things as you labor today and throughout the week. Turn to Him in prayer and rest assured that He will answer those prayers. Sing Psalter 253:1-5.

November 13 Read Exodus 3:11-15

Moses was a changed man from the brash young man forty years ago. Now he knew enough to say who am I to lead this people. One of the favorite pronouns in the world today, and sad to say, in the church as well is the pronoun I. We love to say I did... We need to say God did... We need to look at things from the perspective of our neighbor. God had an answer for Moses. God said let Egypt and Israel know that the covenant God has sent you to carry out His will. That is all that you need to do. We, too, need this admonition. We must not vaunt ourselves up in this world. We must put our trust in the I AM THAT I AM. By doing this we will prosper both in this life and the life to come. The precious truths of the covenant have been given to us, people of God. Let us walk in them now and always. Sing Psalter 241:1-5.

November 14 Read Exodus 3:16-22

God lays out in front of Moses all that He must do. He does this very directly and very straight-forwardly. This is plain if we compare today's verses with the rest of the account of Israel's deliverance from Egypt. God also lays out before us our deliverance from the spiritual Egypt in which we live. In His Word we find all that we need to know. We have a duty, therefore. We must read that Word! We must study that Word! We must memorize that Word in order that we may use it throughout our whole life on this world. People of God of all ages, do you know the Word of the Lord to you? Do you study that word even as the Bereans of old did? Parents, do you demand that your children know their catechism, memory work, and Bible lessons well? This is our calling. This we must do. Sing Psalter 222:1-5.

November 15 Read Exodus 4:1-9

Moses had a hard time in trusting in God. His confidence was shaken when his way did not work and he could not believe that God's way would work. So now he comes with protests against God and his way. This was a lack of faith on Moses's part. It does not say that God's way of faith is weak, but rather because man is

sinful his faith is weak. This is testified abundantly in Scripture and in the confessions which explain Holy Writ. God was patient with Moses, as He is with us, and gave to him signs of His power. The rod, the leprosy, and the blood were all various signs which showed God's power and justice. God gives to us signs as well. Do we watch for them? Do we listen to them? Do we believe in them? Let us learn from Moses not to be hesitant at God's word. Sing Psalter 73:1-4.

November 16 Read Exodus 4:10-17

In man's way of thinking God begins to lose patience with Moses. But this cannot be. God does not lose patience with His people. For He is patience personified. His longsuffering is well documented. But we, with Moses, must learn to obey God without questioning His word. This is what Moses was taught when God asked, "Who made man's mouth?" We must believe that God doeth all things well for his people. His way is best even if we do not think so. We must not try to change God's mind or think that we know what is in that mind. That can never be. If we do, we will face God's wrath even as Moses did. In all these accounts let us see that there are times in which we must not emulate Moses but rather learn from his sins. Sing Psalter 72:1-4.

November 17 Read Exodus 4:18-23

First of all we learn something of Jethro in this passage. We do not have much background for this man. We know that he was a priest of Midian. We find that he has God's people at heart in his later advice to Moses. He is one of those Old Testament saints like Job who lived away from the main body of the people of God. God prepared him for Moses and for His people. Secondly, we see that God continues to assure and direct Moses in His work of delivering the people of God. He continues to tell him that the task will not be easy. Satan through Pharaoh will not let Israel out of his clutches easily. But God will be with Moses and He will deliver his people. He will do this through the slaughter of Egypt's firstborn. He will deliver us through the death of His firstborn Christ Jesus. Let us pray for the grace to embrace God's deliverance and to live lives of thanksgiving for such deliverance. Sing Psalter 33.

November 18 Read Exodus 4:24-31

There are two ideas in today's reading for us. The first idea, and one very applicable for today, is that we must do all of what God commands us to do in worship to Him. Moses had not circumcised his sons. Why this is so, we cannot say for sure. Maybe he did not do it in order not to offend his wife. This shows us that we must obey God no matter what the circumstances. If we do not set ourselves apart from the world (that was what circumcision pictured), God will not bless us. God also used this to make Zipporah go and live with her father. This may be so that Moses was not distracted during his work, or this may be a further chastisement of Moses's unbelief. Secondly, we must see that the people are eager for deliverance. As we will learn some did not like the manner of deliverance. Some wanted Egypt and deliverance. These, like us, had to learn God's way. Sing Psalter 281.

November 19 Read Exodus 5:1-14

Moses, Aaron, and the people of Israel learned rather quickly that Pharaoh was not going to let Israel leave Egypt even for a short time. We see not only the power of Satan but also the council of God in this. Satan will do all that he can to keep God's people from walking in righteousness. He wishes to keep them in the wickedness that is found in this world. He will do this by many means. Here he uses the potentate of a powerful country. But we also see

God's plan in all this. God had decreed that the Pharaoh must sit on the throne in order that God may glorify Himself. The events of today's reading also serve to show that God tests His people. The hardships that they went through was for the trying of their faith and for their good. Let us remember this as we go through difficult ways in this life. Sing Psalter 272.

November 20 Read Exodus 5:15-23

As we continue with the thoughts of yesterday, we see that God must show the leaders of His church that His ways are best. We see this not only in Moses but also in the elders of the people of Israel. Leaders must go on the path set for them by God. They must make decisions with that in mind as well. If they take the easy way, they will find that God is not pleased. If they do not lead the people in God's path, He will take account of their failures at the day of judgment. God's ways are not man's ways. We like things quick, clean, and easy. It usually does not work out that way. Frequent, long, hard meetings of the church's leaders are the norm because sin is found in that church. Let us, as members of the church of God or leaders of that church, bow before the ways of God for they are good. Sing Psalter 273:1-4.

November 21 Read Exodus 6:1-13

One of the truths that God developed with His people is that of the covenant. God established that covenant with Adam as He walked with Him in the cool of the evening. But Adam did not know the full realization of that covenant. God revealed to Noah more of that covenant after the flood, but he, too, did not understand the full implications of the covenant of grace. In Abraham we have a further exposition of the covenant. In this chapter God reveals to the captives in Egypt what it means that He is the I AM, the covenant God of His people. What a precious truth that He revealed to them and reveals to us today! In that covenant He hears our groanings. In that covenant He answers our groanings and lets us know that He will be our God. Let us rejoice in that covenant and live out of the blessings of that covenant. Sing Psalter 273:5-7.

November 22 Read Exodus 6:14-30

In this portion of chapter 6 we have evidence of that covenant of grace. God saves His people in the line of continued generations. What a beautiful truth that is for us! What a powerful incentive to wish to bring for covenant seed! In the bringing forth of that covenant seed, we realize the blessings of that covenant. As we celebrate our national thanksgiving(USA readers), let us remember to give thanks for covenant blessings. Let us not restrict our blessings to things earthly, temporal, or physical. Let us not even only give thanks for freedom to worship God. Let us include all the covenant blessings in our celebrations of thanksgiving in this day. Let us be thankful that God has said, "I am the Lord." This is what Moses had to do; this is what we must do. Sing Psalter 360.

November 23 Read Exodus 7:1-13

In this chapter we see the more full realization of God's plan concerning Pharaoh and the deliverance of the children of Israel. Pharaoh will be brought to his knees by God by these means. Oh, he will not fall on his knees in true worship but rather out of submission to the mighty God of Israel. Pharaoh, as the picture of Satan, would learn that God is God and there is no one like him. This is also what will happen in the last days. The wicked world, Satan, and antichrist will be forced to acknowledge God for what He is. They will call for the mountains to cover them and will find no answer and no peace. The people of God should long for this day

even though it will bring turmoil to them as well. Are we praying, “Come quickly, Lord Jesus”? Sing Psalter 293.

November 24 Read Exodus 7:14-25

Pharaoh refused to let Israel go. He hardened his heart at the word of the Lord. Notice the strong figure here. Pharaoh’s heart was already a stone. How could it get any harder? Such is the reaction of the wicked to God’s word. Because he hardened his heart, God, to show His majesty, sent the first of the ten plagues, or strokes, upon Egypt. In the first plague God attacked Egypt’s life, its hope, and its god: the Nile River. The very hope of their existence was made to stink before Egypt. Wherever its water was to be found, instead was found stinking blood. This was not only outside, this but was in Egypt’s houses as well. Israel, too, was affected by this plague. They had to learn not to put their trust in the gods of the heathen. They also had to learn that they way of salvation was the bloody way of the cross. This lesson is ours to learn as well. Do we put other gods before Jehovah? If we do, let us cling to the cross of Christ for forgiveness. Sing Psalter 187.

November 25 Read Exodus 8:1-15

Striking the Nile River did not change the heart of Pharaoh. As soon as he saw that his magicians were able to perform this wonder, as soon as the water was usable again, and as soon as he thought that he had the upper hand, he again said no to the God of heaven and earth. Once again God struck at the comfort of Egypt. Frogs and all of their slimy ways inhabited the very houses of Egypt. A man went to bed fighting frogs and he woke up with frogs on his pillow. Pharaoh was not impressed. His magicians, inspired by Satan and permitted by God, were also able to bring forth frogs with their enchantments. When Moses had the frogs taken away at Pharaoh’s own hour, Pharaoh once again hardened his heart. There were frogs in Goshen as well. God reminds His people not to become comfortable with the pleasures of this world. These plagues would serve to teach Israel and us the lessons of a powerful teacher. Pharaoh did not learn; have we? Sing Psalter 136.

November 26 Read Exodus 8:16-19

The third plague was without warning upon Pharaoh and Egypt. While the first plague affected their gods and the second their comfort, this plague affects their very bodies. Lice inflicted all of Egypt both man and beast. Israel was not exempt from this plague. God was leading His people through His lessons for them. Soon they would know, as no other people can know, that He alone is God over heaven and earth. We also see the hardness of Pharaoh’s heart. God is changing it from sandstone to granite. Even though the court magicians could not bring forth lice, even though even they confessed that this was God’s doing, Pharaoh would not allow Israel to leave Egypt. May we pray that our hearts never become like Pharaoh because from that there is no repentance. Sing Psalter 119:1-3.

November 27 Read Exodus 8:20-32

With plague number four comes another change. Once again God smites the gods of Egypt. God plagues Egypt with their fly god. Will the heathen ever learn not to make gods out of created things? No, and in the words of Paul in Romans 1, “It leaves them without excuse.” The change in this stroke shows us the antithesis. God put a division between Goshen and the land of Egypt. There were no pesky flies affecting life in Goshen. The inhabitants of it could carry on their daily life without being annoyed by flies. Does this soften the heart of Pharaoh? No! His heart became harder. Do we walk the life of the antithesis or do we harden our heart and say yes to the things of Satan in our lives? The antithesis is a precious part of our

covenant life with God. Let us love it and walk in an antithetical manner in all that we do. Sing Psalter 119:4-6.

November 28 Read Exodus 9:1-12

In plagues five and six God once again strikes Egypt’s comfort and bodies. The murrain of cattle also showed the futility of one of their most sacred gods. As their cattle began to die, some Egyptians might have wondered at the wisdom of their ruler’s decisions. They may have even openly questioned those decisions. As boils broke out upon their skins, their complaints may have become louder. Pharaoh’s magicians even could not give to him counsel. Did this change anything? No, it did not. Pharaoh’s heart was not hard enough yet. He was not ready to give the glory due to the name of Jehovah. He and Egypt would have to endure five more strokes. Only then would the cup of iniquity be full, and Israel be driven out of the land. Let us wait with patience and see the strokes of God upon the wicked as He brings about the day of His coming. Sing Psalter 106.

November 29 Read Exodus 9:13-21

The final round of plagues is about to be unleashed upon Egypt. Once again God targets the gods of Egypt as He would strike its cattle by hail and storms. The very nature which Egypt worshiped would rise up and rain destruction upon its livelihood. God warned them of what was coming. Was this an act of His grace or mercy? No! Of course not! This was just God providing the Egyptians another way of refusing to give to Him the glory due to His name. They were filling their cup of iniquity and were doing it quickly. God warns us of the consequences and folly of our sin. Do we pay heed to those warnings? Do we listen when He speaks in creation and in the activities of the world around us? Let us pray for His grace to preserve us in this world of sin in which we walk while we wait for the coming of Christ. Sing Psalter 95.

November 30 Read Exodus 9:22-35

As we read yesterday some did not fear the word of the Lord and left their cattle out. When the storm commenced all that they could do was watch the destruction of their precious herds. It was too dangerous for them to go out into the fields and save them. God rained judgment upon Egypt in this way. God also continued to harden the heart of Pharaoh. Take notice of the many times that God told Pharaoh when something would start or stop. This should have served notice that these happenings were not by chance or bad luck as the world calls it. What does Pharaoh do? Verse thirty-four tells us. “...He sinned more, and hardened his heart, he and his servant.” Pharaoh was not alone in his sin. His people, too, were being judged by God for their wickedness. We must remember that God will render to every man at the end of time according to his works. This includes us as well. Sing Psalter 100.

November 31 Read Exodus 49:29-33

As Jacob finishes blessing his sons, he once again reminds them that he is not to be buried in Egypt. As we have seen before, this is not just some earthly desire; it has a very spiritual meaning. Jacob is ready to die. He can peacefully leave this earth. His sojourn and pilgrimage is over. What about us? Do we have spiritual desires? Do we lead our children in those desires? Are we sending them out tonight to serve Satan or are we teaching them about the great Reformation? Are we ready to die? Do we feel our work is done in this life? We must see that it is necessary to know that God holds our days in His hands. We must be ready to leave this vale of tears when He calls us home. We must be ready to leave the earthly Egypt and journey to our heavenly Canaan. Are you ready, people of God? Sing Psalter 31:1, 3, 6, 7.

Israel Also Tempted

by Melissa Van Baren

Considering Israel and her battles with the temptations of music can help to reassure us in our battles against the devil in resisting worldly music. The past examples of temptations were put there not so we can say that it's o.k. for us to fall into sin, but to encourage us in our battles, so we don't fall into those sins. Even though in our sinful nature, we still do. It will be a constant battle against the wiles of the devil but by God's grace we will be sustained, as were God's people, the tribe of Israel.

The Israelites had many surrounding nations which influenced them. There were the Moabites, Hittites, Ammonites, Edomites and you can't forget the Egyptians. They all had a great effect on the Israelites. The Israelites were tempted on many sides both in worship and in day to day life. So it's safe to say that they were probably influenced in the musical sphere as well because of the fact they had such close interrelations with these countries.

The Israelites along with the rest of the civilizations had "a class of skilled crafts men, among them builders of instruments, whose inventiveness brought about better and finer instruments of music." (*Music in Ancient Israel*, pg. 35) These instruments were great articles for trade. In trading, the instruments became used for many different purposes depending on the culture. For example, Egypt used instruments very often in feasts and festivals where there was usually excess wine and much dancing (especially among the women). They, too, liked to party as our world does today. It must have been hard for them not to get sucked into those other cultures and their festivities and feasts.

As we look at others examples from the Bible, we notice that Israel was lured into adopting those cultures. They married outside the tribe, which had a domino effect. The kings were often influenced by those wives. The wives from the other cultures undoubtedly carried

with them their beliefs and customs which were sometimes hard to resist. They were not only influenced through marriage, but also through their trading and while in captivity. When they were in Egypt and in Babylon they must have picked up different cultural practices, such as the music. Heathen practices surrounded them every day for years and years. They had to live daily among their dancing and singing, resisting temptations of the devil and trying to live holy lives for the Lord.

We, too, can familiarize with these people of Israel. Day in and day out, we hear music all around us. Some of it good but most is bad. We, also, must continue in our everyday life resisting the wiles of the devil as popular culture threatens to enter our worship service. This is hard because some of it looks safe and simply a part of our nations culture, but we must be careful because this is how the devil works to get his fingers into our church. The devil works the same today as he did yesterday, and the day before, and years before that. Where we least expect him to enter into our lives and churches is how he does enter in. This is why I would like to continue to research and write on the past church and her music.

In the next article I would like to focus on the church of the Apostolic Age and how they worshiped God through their singing. Was their worship similar to the church of the Old Testament? If so, how? Can we see how God preserved the church through the ages? How did Christ show them how to worship and did Christ change it much from the Old Testament? Was worship made simpler than that of the Old Testament? In what ways did it stay the same? Those are just a few questions to ponder before the next article on the Apostolic Age of worship. ❖

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

When I In Awesome Wonder...
The Golden Coast Of Michigan
The Mighty Wind

by Deane Wassink

The hands of a sculptor shaping clay into a recognizable object is a weak picture of the sculpting of the shoreline of the Golden Coast at the hand of our great Creator. He builds the towering dunes and removes them at will. The breath of His power can destroy and cover the puny work of man's hands in a single storm. We try to control the wind or make it do our bidding by setting out snow fences or trees for wind-breaks. But, it is an unreliable and unpredictable servant, at best.

The shore of the West Coast of Michigan faces the western wind that can hammer it without restraint as it comes across the open water of Lake Michigan. The power of the wind was brought home to me recently when I was on the shore with my two youngest sons, David and Tyler. We were visiting a job site just south of Saugatuck. What seemed to be a moderate wind of thirty miles per hour inland was focused into a howling monster between the dunes and the water. Tyler, the eight-year-old, could barely stand up or move against the wind. So much sand was blowing that our tracks disappeared in fifteen seconds. A three-inch deep trench we dug with our heels was gone within three minutes, completely filled in. This is a small example of the incredible amount of sand that the wind moves on the beach. I have seen places where there are eight to ten foot sand drifts created over the fall and winter months, when most of the movement occurs. The wind has formed dunes in places several miles inland from the present shoreline. It has shaped and sifted the sand so that man can mine it and put it to productive use. It is used in die-casting, sand-blasting, sandpaper, and the sand on shingles, to name a few. Some sand is coarse and yellow. Other sand is so

white and fine it looks like a mountain of sugar when it is mined. In Ludington there is a series of dunes that follows one after the other so that it looks like huge waves marching along. The wind constantly moves and repositions them. If you figure a cubic yard of sand weighs between two and three thousand pounds a single wind-storm can move millions of tons of sand along the shore. In other words, one storm can move more sand than all the sand mines have done in fifty years. That is humbling!

How appropriate, then, for God to use the "sound as of a mighty rushing wind" to picture to us the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. The wind that sculpts the sand and moves it into mountains is the picture of the work of the Spirit changing our hearts, sculpting them into something new and pleasing before God. Also, the picture of the wind shows how irresistible the work of the Spirit is. No man can stand against His blast. We must never despair over the lack of repentance of one we love. One almighty blast from the Spirit is sufficient to bring life out of death, and repentance out of rebellion. The mighty wind is a concrete reminder of God's sovereignty over man's heart. To add to the picture, the winds with the waves are the tools God uses to make the singing sands of Michigan's shore, which is the subject of a previous article. What an awesome God we serve!

"And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting." Acts 2:2 ❖

Deane is a member of First Protestant Reformed Church in Holland, Michigan.

Rev. Richard Moore

edited by Kris Moelker

On April 7, 1938, Ralph and Stella Moore became the parents of Rev. Richard Moore. Rev. Moore was born in Miller, South Dakota.

Growing up in Tyndall, South Dakota, Rev. Moore enjoyed building and flying model airplanes, fishing, hunting and golfing. Now he still likes to golf, but he has not had the occasion to golf since he became missionary to Ghana. He enjoys reading, but he considers that hardly an hobby. He would still enjoy building model airplanes, but he does not have time for this right now.

Rev. Moore attended Tyndall Grade School and Tyndall High School. He received his Bachelors and Masters Degrees from Northern State University in South Dakota.

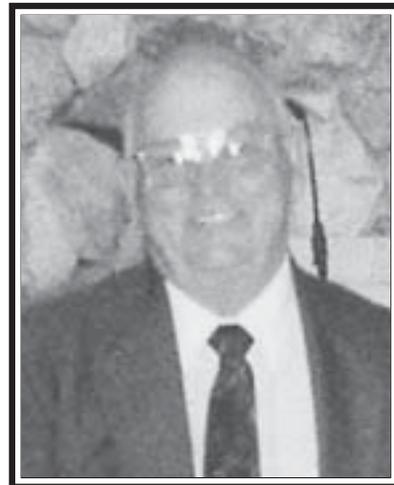
During his teenage years, Rev. Moore says that there were many times when he was pressured to participate in parties that included alcohol. He also felt the pressures to follow many different winds of doctrine. Teenagers today experience many of the same pressures that he faced as a young person.

On November 23, 1960, Rev. Moore married Jannet Hauck. She is very strong in the faith and has been a wonderful help to Rev. Moore throughout his ministry. The Lord has richly blessed them with a long life together. They have ten children and thirty-four grandchildren.

The Lord led Rev. Moore to and prepared him for the ministry in various ways. He was given a wife who loved the Lord. The Lord also prepared Rev. Moore through much schooling, much prayer, and the encouragement of fellow believers. Rev. Moore also was given the opportunity to have many visits with ministers who

came to fill the vacant pulpit at Forbes Protestant Reformed Church. Much study of Protestant Reformed literature and most of all the preaching of the Word also prepared Rev. Moore for the ministry.

When they learned of his desire to enter the ministry, the reaction of Rev. Moore's family and peers was



very positive. Even his parents, who were not even reformed at the time, supported his decision.

Rev. Moore has many memories of his years as a seminarian. He recalls the fellowship he was able to have with fellow students and the professors. His exam at Synod and being licensed to preach in our churches were also memorable events.

Rev. Moore was ordained in 1968. His first charge was in Isabel, South Dakota, where he labored until 1971, when he was called to labor in Doon, Iowa. He brought the Word to the church in Doon until 1976 when he was called to go to Canada and labor in Edmonton, Alberta. In 1982, the Lord called Rev. Moore was to leave Edmonton and return to Isabel. He labored in Isabel until 1985 when he received the call to labor in Hull, Iowa. He served as the pastor of our Hull congregation until 1999 when he was called to the foreign mission field in Ghana, West Africa.

Regarding his memorable experiences of teaching young children catechism, Rev. Moore says every day that he and others teach children catechism is a blessed experience. This is especially true when he sees children growing in faith, and he is seeing this in Ghana. These children are growing in the Reformed faith. It is a great joy for Rev. Moore to hear them sing Psalter Numbers and it is also rewarding for him to hear them answer questions put before them in front of the whole mission group.

As a minister and missionary, it is rewarding for Rev. Moore to witness the people in Ghana growing from unbelief or false belief to where they can know many of the Reformed doctrines and believe them. It is also rewarding for him to witness God's work through the ministry that leading young people to marry in the Lord and

to obey God's command to bring forth covenant children.

Concerning the controversies that we as churches have faced, Rev. Moore says there has always been some controversy in the churches. God, as a faithful covenant God, has always brought His faithful through them to strengthen their faith and cause His Church to stand even firmer upon the truth.

To young men considering the ministry of the Word to be their calling, Rev. Moore has this advice: "Be given to study, especially of the Word and the confessions. Be given to prayer. Expect to pass through many hard trials, trust in the grace of God and His care of you."

Rev. Moore would like to see the young people be more spiritual minded as Paul teaches in Galatians 5. He encourages the young people to take more time to read good books and spend less time with the various forms of media especially vain television programs. He also encourages the young people to spend time even on dates to discuss the wonderful truths of the Scriptures.

It encourages Rev. Moore to know that our young people are knowledgeable in the truths of the Scriptures and that they do try to walk uprightly in many aspects of their lives. ❖

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

Where We Stand

The Lord Creates Evil (1)

by Prof. Herman Hanko

Reprinted from the mission newsletter circulated in the UK by Covenant PRC.

Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid? shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it? (Amos 3:6).

I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all these things (Isaiah 45:7).

The reader of our *Newsletter* who sent in a request to have these texts explained apparently was particularly concerned about what the

texts say concerning the relation between God and evil. The passage in Amos speaks of evil in the city which the Lord has done; and the text in Isaiah speaks of Jehovah creating evil.

These important texts address themselves to a very common error. All pagan religions, also at the time when Isaiah wrote, were guilty of the error of Dualism. These pagan religions noticed that in the world one finds good and bad, forces of darkness and forces of light. In an effort to explain two such contradictory powers in the world, heathen religions spoke of two ultimate powers or gods, one of whom was responsible for the good and one of whom was responsible for the bad.

The background of Isaiah's prophecy also speaks of this. The whole chapter is addressed to Cyrus, king of Persia (vs. 1). The Persian religion was dualistic: Ormuzd was the god of good; Ahriman was the god of evil. God, through the prophecy of His servant Isaiah, wants Cyrus to know that He alone is God and there is none besides Him. Dualism is impossible.

That Dualism continues throughout history. In the days of the early church, the saints were confronted with the errors of Gnosticism and Manichaeism. The great church father Augustine belonged for a time to this latter sect. Both heresies taught a dualism of light and darkness, of good and evil.

It is no different today. Especially the charismatic movement, which has sorely infected the church, is guilty of such a dualism. Those who have been persuaded of the argument of the charismatics hold to the idea that God only gives good things; bad things come from the devil. When a family loses a child through death, we are told that the devil took our child from us. When we are sick, the devil is said to bring sickness. When catastrophes come on the world, the devil brings these. Only good things come from God.

This is a dreadful error which ultimately robs the people of God of their comfort.

All forms of Arminianism are also essentially dualistic. They teach that the will of man which decides salvation is independent of the power of God. God is helpless until an autonomous man accepts Christ. So man is a power along side of God, and God can do nothing until man accepts Christ. We must make our choice. Either all things, good and bad, come from God, or there is another power in the universe, independent of God, which sends evil. God has no control over such a power; it operates independently from Him.

So there are two powers in this world, both ultimate powers, both independent of each other. God is then no longer the sovereign God Who alone does all things. He is not the omnipotent God to Whom belongs all power. He is a helpless God when confronted by the powers of evil. He is limited in His power by the power of Satan and evil and can only fight against such power in the hopes that some day He will overcome it.

The Bible-believing Christian does not want or need such a god. His faith rests in the one true God Who is sovereign in all He does.

It is against all this dualism that these texts come with their sharp language. "Shall there be evil in the city, and the Lord has not done it?" "I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all these things."

The prophet Amos was speaking to apostate Israel upon whom was soon to come the judgment of God through the Assyrians which would result in Israel's captivity.

The question of verse 6 is the last in a series of questions, the answers to which are obvious. "Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid?" That will never happen. "Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?" Of course not!

So the text in Amos surely refers to all the "bad" things that happen in this world of suffering and grief. War and destruction, famines and plagues, sickness and death, suffering and sorrow — all these are evils which the Lord sends. They do not come by some power (Satan's perhaps) independent of God and over which God has no control. They come from God. The Lord does it! No dualism. God is God Who is sovereign and mighty.

This is the great comfort of the child of God. While surely all the calamities of life are sent as judgments upon the wicked, the child of God finds refuge in all these troubles in what God does, knowing that all things work together for good to them that love God and are called according to His purpose. ❖

Prof. Hanko is professor emeritus of the Protestant Reformed Seminary in Grandville, Michigan.

In Wittenberg

by J.P. deKlerk

In the German city of Wittenberg still stands the church and the tower of the Palace-Church, once the center of religious activities, because of Dr. Martin Luther. Prince Frederic III (called “the Wise”) put it at his disposal to become a bulwark of the Reformation.

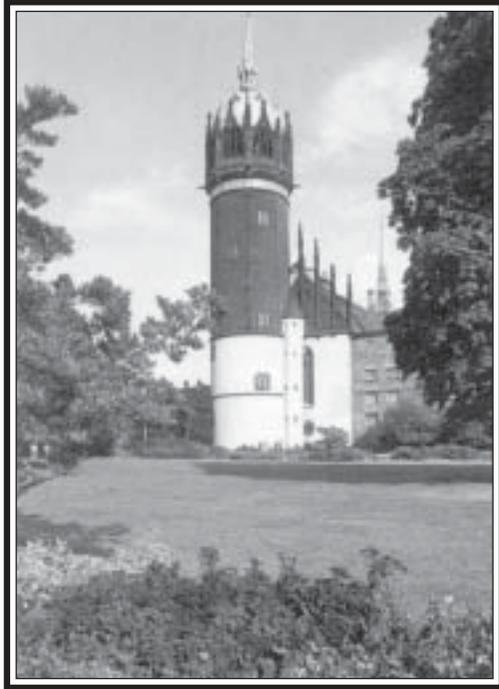
Luther can be seen on a painting made by Cranach, during his lifetime. The Prince is represented by a small statue of marble, kneeling and praying, in a corner of the church.



A lot of restoration work has been done, but everything quickly becomes dirty again by the smoke of factories around the city.

The interior of the church is freshly painted. Many tourists are expected again, though the number has diminished since the Lutheran Churches in several countries have adopted modernist ideas; some do not even recognize the principles anymore on which the Lutheran





Churches were founded. However at the Lord's Day in Wittenberg the churches are still chock-a-block.

Old documents state that the city started in 1130 and received the rights of a city from Arch-Duke Albrecht II in 1293. His family remained in power over Wittenberg

and surroundings (region of Sachsen) until 1422. Then came the Wettines, to which family Prince Frederic III belonged, who protected Dr. Martin Luther.

He gave Luther the former monastery, when Luther married Katherina von Bora, in the center of the city, close to the entrance of the university, which is now dirty and neglected.



The name of the street is “Die Collegienstrasse.” At number 54 you still find the so-called “Augusteum,” a theological training school, built in 1564, next to a small back entrance to Luther’s house.

At number 60 stands the house of Melanchthon. He and Luther used the same pump for the water supply of their families (Luther had six children. His wife looked after the garden, the cattle, and the kitchen).

Opposite number 62 you find “das Neue Collegium”, built in 1511, a dormitory for students of the university. Above the entrance the “Luther-rose” (a white



flower on a blue background, red heart with black cross in the middle).

At number 81 lived Luther’s physician, Augustin Schurff.

Next to it is a narrow alleyway to the big City Church of Wittenberg, where Luther also preached. In the house where Luther, his family and several friends lived, has been made a Museum, that shows the whole history of the Reformation (opened in 1883). There are 15,000 old drawings and 12,000 engravings, 8,000 manuscripts, a collection of 1,600 old coins, and 150 original paintings. ❖

Singing In Wittenberg

by J.P. deKlerk

On September 24, 1997, 1000 Dutch Christians (Reformed) went to sing in the City Church of Wittenberg (Germany), where Dr. Martin Luther preached in his day.

“A Mighty Fortress Is Our God” has sounded there, and many other hymns and psalms, heard and seen on the television in The Netherlands, and all over Europe.

This was organized by the “Evangelische Omroep” (the Dutch Christian Broadcasting Company, which

should not be mixed up with the movement of the Evangelicals in the USA, because this name was only chosen by the Reformed people to make a distinction with the Roman Catholic Broadcasters), which is supported by more than a million people.

Organizing all the technical appliances took a lot of time in advance. Microphones, loudspeakers, spotlights, had to be placed where they would not hinder the television cameras, etc.

The conductor was Jan Q. Zwart, with Martin Zonnenberg at the old Sauer Organ. Accompaniment by the young flutists Marjolein de Wit and Kees Alers, plus Wim Stok with a bassoon.

The director of the “Evangelische Omroep”, Rev. A. van der Veer, opened the event with a meditation.

The whole company also made use of the opportunity to admire the Palace Church (remember the 95 theses nailed to the Church door) and the house where Dr. Martin Luther lived with his family (a former monastery of the Benedictines). ❖



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

"LITTLE LIGHTS"

November 13, 354

... let it shine!

by Connie Meyer

Monica was a young wife who had longed for the birth of their child. And now finally, on this mid-November morn, he was here – a beautiful baby boy. She held him close. His tiny feet and hands, so perfectly formed, were a wonder to her. She wept for joy that God had given her this precious, newborn son.

But her tears soon turned to grief. Her little boy grew and played as all little boys might do in this city of Tagaste where they lived in North Africa, but her son did not always play so fairly with the other boys.

Then one day she found that he had lied. Another day she found he had stolen from their own goods. And yet another day he had gone to see a show of acting and drama. Her precious son was growing up to be a very rebellious and wicked young man. She prayed constantly and fervently with many tears. The wonderful day of his birth had been replaced by many days of sorrow.

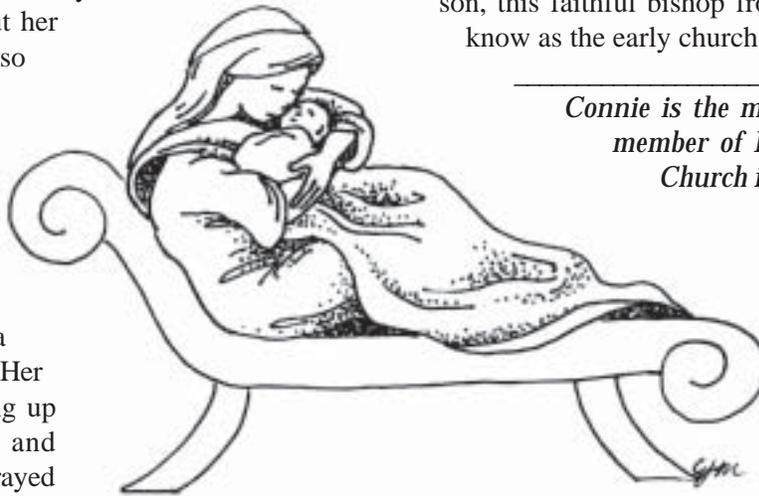
Sadly, things went from bad to worse. Her son fell into even more sin. Now he was a grown man, but he did not believe in the God his mother had taught him about. No, he believed in one lie after another, loving a life of sinful pleasure and pride. But this godly mother kept praying for her wayward son. She prayed and cried, and prayed and cried some more. She did not know, but God had plans for that wicked son of hers.

Indeed, God had plans. Her son was very intelligent and liked to study the wisdom of the world. In his vain thinking he even thought to hear a preacher of the Gospel, for he might learn something about the way a preacher speaks in front of people. He forgot that God's Word, when faithfully preached, is more powerful than any two-edged sword. That Word smote his heart and God converted him. His mother's prayers were answered.

God used this man to be a tremendous minister of the Word. He faithfully and powerfully preached and

wrote and battled for the truth of the Gospel. We study his writings even today, more than 1,600 years later, and his books still help us to understand the truth that salvation is by grace alone. Yes, God had plans for Monica's son, this faithful bishop from North Africa whom we know as the early church father – Augustine. ❖

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



Puzzle

After hearing Christ's voice in the preaching of the Word, Augustine's heart was pricked. He was in a garden alone, feeling miserable about his sin. But he had a copy of Paul's epistles with him. He read Romans 13:13-14 and the words changed his life forever. Unscramble some of the words from this same text below:

“Let us walk thylenos, as in the day; not in noigtir and senedkrnsun, not in rangihbcem and stewnonans, not in festir and nyengiv. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not pinoirvos for the slehf, to ulliff the stuls thereof.”

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Church News

BAPTISMS

"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."

Mark 16:16

The sacrament of Holy Baptism was administered to:

Travis Jon, son of Mr. & Mrs. Jon Lubbers – Byron Center, MI
Olivia Marie, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Les VanDenTop – Doon, IA
Carter James, son of Mr. & Mrs. Brad Langerak – Grace, MI
Larae Frances, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Henry DeJong – Holland, MI
Leah Rose, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Mike Rau – Hope, MI
Seiger James, son of Mr. & Mrs. James Boorsma – Hudsonville, MI
Michael William, son of Mr. & Mrs. Joshua Hoekstra – Hudsonville, MI
Taylor Jo, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Brad Kuiper – Hudsonville, MI
Morgan Jo, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Scott VanDerGriend – Peace, IL

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:

Phillip Hall – Ballymena, N Ireland
Ross Brands – Edgerton, MN
Tim Wigger – Hudsonville, MI
Cory Griess – Loveland, CO
Sara Fennema – Peace, IL
Tim DeJong – South Holland, IL
Amy Lenting – South Holland, IL
Todd VanBaren – South Holland, IL

MARRIAGES

"...and they twain shall be one flesh."

Matthew 19:5

United in the bond of Holy Matrimony were:

Mr. Scott Mantel and Miss Sherry Winters – Doon, IA