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How Can We Improve? —This Is What You Said



by John Huizenga

In the August/September issue we asked for your suggestions for improving *Beacon Lights*. We also had the young people who attended the convention fill out a survey asking which topics were of interest, which writing style and writers were most attractive, and which rubrics currently in *Beacon Lights* were the most beneficial. We had about a dozen responses to the article, and I have a stack of about 450 surveys from the conventioners. I want to thank you for your time and interest in our work. I also want to extend a special thanks to those who helped distribute the surveys at the convention.

I have looked through all of the surveys and listed below the comments that were jotted down. I have not yet had time to do a thorough analysis of the survey, but I plan to round up some help to do this soon and publish the results.

Your words of encouragement and suggestions are much appreciated. We will take these suggestions, and with prayers for wisdom we will put forth energy to make *Beacon Lights* an interesting and spiritually edifying magazine for godly young people.

Responses to the article:

- A week in a young person's life
- Articles on inconsistent living
- Controversies in a young person's life
- Critique of evolutionist writings
- More articles from parents, grandparents, and young people
- More articles on school
- More graphics and pictures
- Question/answer section
- Topics addressed in school by high school teachers
- Variety in type size and font
- Word search puzzles based on Bible stories written by young people

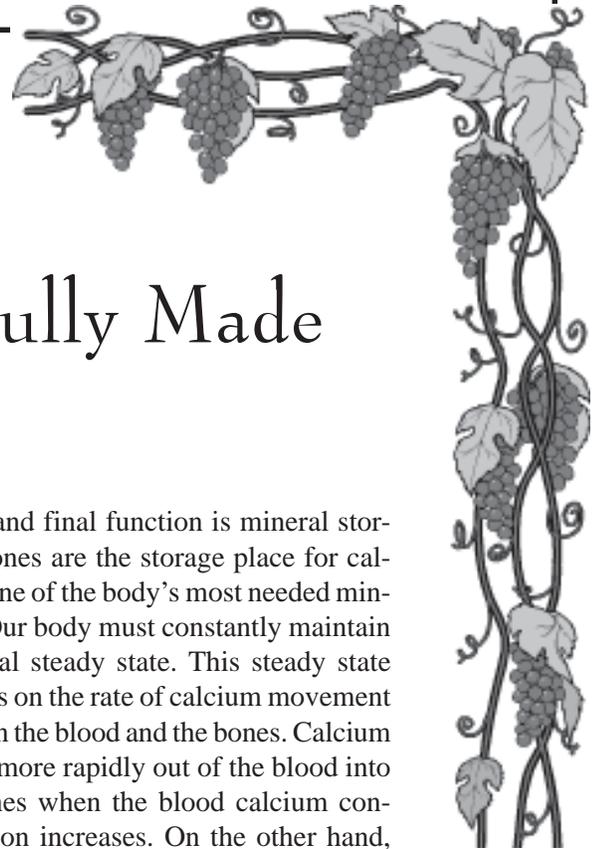
Survey comments from Convention:

- Address the issues young people deal with (many)
- Aimed more at shaping a teenage life
- Articles about dating, sex, drinking, and smoking
- Articles about sports
- Articles on staying in shape
- Articles that apply to daily living and promote discussion
- Articles that grab your attention right away
- Better stories
- Carefully selected writers
- Change the Church History
- Change the cover
- Definitely keep Little Lights
- Don't use such big, hard-to-understand words
- Enjoy the poems (many)
- Fictional stories
- Keep it the same (many)
- Keep the Confessions of Faith section
- Keep the Fruitful Branches section
- Keep the Pastor Profiles and Church History
- Keep up the Devotionals (many)
- Learning experiences in life
- Make *Beacon Lights* bigger
- Make it easier for young people to understand (many)
- Modern issues and today's news
- More articles by pastors about specific trials and actions of young people (many)
- More articles describing how we can help
- More articles that encourage dating
- More controversial issues
- More devotions
- More From the Pastor's Study
- More geared toward young people (many)
- More humor
- More ideas of younger people
- More input from young people (many)

- More interesting articles
- More interesting topics and real stories
- More older people and parents articles
- More on mission work and how we can help
- More poems and less Dutch fictional stories
- More stuff on dating
- More young people writing about everyday life
- Newer subjects

- No more articles on how “dating is bad”
- No more editorials or poems
- Not so structured and strict
- Personal experiences from young people
- Shorter articles
- Showing your faith in your job
- Stories for young people ❖

Fruitful Branches



Fearfully and Wonderfully Made

by Sara Huizinga

Psalm 139:14 “I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well.”

One of the most intricate parts of the body is the bone structure. There are many different sizes and shapes of bones. Long bones are found in the thighs and arms of a human. Short bones are located in the wrists and ankles. Flat bones, which are usually broad and thin, make up the skull, ribs, shoulder blades, and sternum. These bones are the structural framework of our body.

God created bones with four basic functions. The first one is support. Some bones must bear great weight while others make up the delicate structure of our fingers and toes. The second function is protection. Bones serve to protect the more complex structures in our bodies that keep us alive. Examples of this would be the rib cage which protects the lungs and the heart, or the skull which protects the brain. Without these special hard coverings our body’s more delicate structures would be exposed to all outside forces. The third function is movement. Muscles are firmly attached to bones and as they contract, they pull on the bones. This pulling produces movement, whether it be bending or straightening. The

fourth and final function is mineral storage. Bones are the storage place for calcium, one of the body’s most needed minerals. Our body must constantly maintain a normal steady state. This steady state depends on the rate of calcium movement between the blood and the bones. Calcium moves more rapidly out of the blood into the bones when the blood calcium concentration increases. On the other hand, calcium moves swiftly out of the bones back into the blood once the blood concentration decreases.

In the Bible God speaks about the significance of bones. In Genesis 2:23 we read of Adam’s view of Eve, his helpmate. “And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of man.” Eve was formed out of a bone, namely the rib, of Adam. She was a part of man down to the physical structure of her body. This symbolizes the fact that Eve was in the subordinate position. Adam was formed first and then Eve. She was not inferior to Adam, but he did have dominion over her.

Another text that speaks of bones is John 19:36. This passage refers to the body of Christ after He was hang-

ing on the cross. "...A bone of him shall not be broken." This passage is a fulfillment of Scripture and also a picture of the righteous. In Psalm 34:19 we read that the righteous have many afflictions, but the Lord always delivers His people. Verse 20 goes on to say that the righteous keepeth all his bones and that none of them are broken. Therefore Jesus' bones were not broken because He was righteous. His flesh was broken, but God would not allow His skeletal frame to be mutilated.

Ephesians 5:30 is one of the clearest and most important scriptural reference to bones. This verse says, "For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." We, the children of Christ, are not only *partakers* of His body as we read in the form for the Lord's Supper, but also *members* of His body and bones.

Bones are a necessity for earthly life, and yet for the child of God there needs to be something more. We need the breath of Christ to make us alive and beautiful. In Ezekiel 37 we read about a valley of dry bones. God showed Ezekiel all the dry bones and then asked him a question. The Lord asked, "Son of man, can these bones live?" Ezekiel stated, "O Lord God, thou knowest." God then replied that He would cause breath to enter the bones so that they would live. This relates to the physical bones of our human body. As a result of sin even the physical body is corrupt. When God formed man, He breathed into man the breath of life. Without that breath we would be nothing but the dust of the ground. With the breath of Christ our dry bones receive health and strength.

God created us with living bones. Bone formation constantly takes place, long after the bones have stopped growing in actual size. Each and every bone plays a significant role in maintaining our body. We are creatures of God and He created us for the sole purpose of revealing His power and majesty. In everything we do we are called to glorify Him.

God breathed into us the breath of life and as we read in Genesis 1:31, "And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good." ❖

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

Thanksgiving

by Kris Moelker

*We thank Thee Lord, that thou art God.
Thou who art our almighty King,
Our everlasting Father,
The Prince of spiritual peace.*

*We thank Thee Lord, for Thy sovereignty.
All things are in Thy control.
Before the world was created
We were in Thy special plan.*

*We thank Thee Lord, for Christ Thy Son.
He left His home in Glory
And to this sin cursed earth He came.
Perfectly He bore our shame.*

*We thank Thee Lord, that thou hast formed
A church with many members
Purchased with Thy Son's precious blood
Which He shed on Calvary.*

*We thank Thee Lord, for Thy great love
Which in our lives is displayed.
We know Thou art ever with us
Upholding us every day.*

*We thank Thee Lord, for fellow saints
Who assist us day by day.
Brothers and sisters in the Lord
Care for us in special ways.*

*We thank Thee Lord, for this season.
A time for us to rejoice
In the gift of Thy beloved Son
Who came to free us from sin.*

*We thank Thee Lord, the day will come
When our bodies will be changed.
No more sin, sorrow, pain, or death
Perfectly we will praise Thee.*

The Fourth Man

A Story from the Time of the Afscheiding

by P. S. Kuiper
translated by Rev. Cornelius Hanko

Chapter 23

The Fourth Man

It was a beautiful Saturday evening, a few weeks after the departure of the emigrants. Maarten and Ko Boelhouwer sat pleasantly resting after their day's work. They were always inseparable friends, even though much had changed in their lives. They, formerly boys, had grown up to be sturdy young men, both of whom already wore a beard.

Koen drew pleasantly on a bitten-off little pipe, while Maarten clamped a small cigar between his teeth: after all, it was Saturday evening!

Recently Koen had also started working in the weavers' shop of the Ham family, where he had taken the place of his father. His father could no longer perform the heavy work of a black weaver and had gone back to the spinning wheel. He now earned less than his son, but Koen did not forget his parents' needs.

Maarten was for some time already the indispensable co-worker of his father, especially now that his grandfather was completely retired from the business. The old man, who could barely walk, sat contently in an armchair next to the bench. Noisy swallows screamed continuously over the farm, and the crickets chirped everywhere. It was as if you could smell the coming summer in the atmosphere.

Maarten and Koen were generally too restless to sit quietly on a bench in the evening like grandfather. But this time they were too much aware of the approaching Sunday. Both had recently made confession of their faith and tomorrow they might celebrate the Lord's Supper together with the congregation. Then they would sit in

the lowly house of Gijsbert Haan at a plain table with the simple stone plates and cups.

Reverend Simon Van Velzen¹ of Amsterdam had arrived already at noon from Bulwalda at the Kerkbrink in a yellow coach.

"Isn't your father at home?" Koen suddenly broke the silence. "No, he fetched Reverend Van Velzen from the coach and brought him to his destination."

"Yes, yes! quite a different arrival than that of Reverend Buddingh eleven years ago in the hollow of the night!"

"You can say that again, man! It is a good thing that king William II now reigns!"

"I will never forget that Sunday as long as I live, it was simply horrible!"

"That it was!" agreed Maarten. He turned to his grandfather: "Do you still remember that you said to me that we were cast into the fiery furnace?" The old man nodded thoughtfully. "That we were, boys, but the fourth man was also present." The young men looked at him inquiringly.

"Do you mean," Koen stammered, "that the angels were round about us?"

"Exactly, my boy. And not only on the 12th of June. Lately, now that I have nothing else to do, I have thought a lot about that. God promises us in Psalm 91 that He will give him angels charge over us. He fulfilled that promise to Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. He still does that. A "fourth man" took care that on Pentecost Monday a wheel broke on Jan Donker's wagon right at our house, Maarten. By that our whole family became involved in the Secession. A few days later, Koen, your father was left in the lurch by the deaconate and attacked by the liquor devils. Later he himself told you about it, and me also. It was again the "fourth man" who pro-

ected him and protected your entire family from ruin. Your family joined our congregation and your father obtained a new boss, who later also joined us. It was the “fourth man” who brought Reverend Buddingh safely into the town and saw to it that he was not too soon detected. The “fourth man” watched over us also on that horrible Sunday. He prevented an untimely ending of our morning service. In the afternoon He helped a number of people to get away and He gave those mistreated the strength to endure.

“He went with you, Maarten, when your companions cast you out and booed you. He stood next to your spinning wheel, Koen, when they plagued and teased you. The walls of the court house in Amsterdam could not stop him, so that our brethren from Loosdrecht and Gaveland could sing their psalms even there. And when Gerbert Hoge birk died before the court, the fourth man immediately carried his soul to its Sender. He is on board the ships that are bringing our friends over the ocean. He will also watch over us by day and by night and always. For the Lord has promised that.”

When the old man was silent because of exhaustion, silence reigned for quite a while on the bench. His words had not only given new meaning to the past, but also courage for the future.

Suddenly Leo, the young dog—Bas was dead already for years—began to bark. He did not know enough to quit and tugged at his chain. “That will likely be your father,” offered Koen. “No,” answered Maarten, “then he barks differently. A stranger is coming, one who seldom comes here. It can very well be even a good acquaintance.” It proved to be an acquaintance, but not a good one.

On the farm appeared the forceful figure of Peter De Nooij. The policeman was in uniform and carried a small box.

The two young men felt an unpleasant sensation when they saw the old enemy of the Secessionists approaching. However De Nooij also did not seem at ease. He was walking quite slowly, which was unusual for him. He wore his cap at an angle, which he otherwise never did.

“Good evening, folks,” he began hesitantly.

“The same to you, De Nooij,” grandfather answered without showing any sign of emotion, “nice weather this evening! You certainly are not coming to bring some unpleasant message, are you?”

“No. Not that, hm, I am actually coming for my wife, you see.”

“Aha, is Geijsbertje Vlaanderen your new boss? Doesn’t she come from Huizen? But take a seat, De Nooij! There is room enough on the bench.”

“No, no.” answered the policeman nervously. “I am on duty tonight, however, ...hm...”

All at once he took a step forward and placed the small box on the lap of the old man. “On behalf of my wife I came to bring you this, Boelhouwer! It is for... for tomorrow. You may use it as long as you have need for it. Eh...now, make good use of it.”

He saluted stiffly and hastened off from the yard again noticeably faster than he had come, newly accompanied by Leo’s barking.

A strange expression had appeared on grandfather’s face. His shaking fingers touched the shiny locks of the little box. His grandson quickly came to his aid and soon the cover clicked open. At the same moment Maarten and Koen both uttered a cry. In the light of the evening sun the dull glimmer of pure tin plates and cups showed itself.

“That is surely not possible!” stammered Maarten.

“Not as far as people are concerned,” answered grandfather, deeply moved, “but with God all things are possible. Tomorrow we may partake of the bread from these plates and of the wine from these cups.”

Koen jumped up at once and reached for his cap. I am going to run after him to thank him!” he cried spontaneously.

But the old man withheld him. “This evening Pieter De Nooij has possibly carried out the most difficult task in his whole career. Don’t make it harder for him, boys. You can better bring this little box to Gerrit Meijer. Actually he now has charge, as it were, of the congregation, now that Gijsbert Haan has left.”

They still remained sitting for a little while, overwhelmed by the unexpected happening. The old gray-headed man wearily straightened his back.

“Here we see again that God sometimes chooses ways of which we do not even dare to dream. Now He uses even our worst enemy and his wife. How it came about that they did this we likely will never find out. But it gives courage for the future! The Holy Spirit can still perform wonders in the hearts of those who remained behind in the Hervormde Kerk (The State Church). He can also stop the disputes in our secession churches and restore peace.² I hope fervently that you may still experience that.

“And for that do not forget the fourth man.”

Then, soon after, when Maarten and Koen, still impressed with what was spoken, left with the little box, the old man hobbled to the gate. There he stood leaning against the large linden tree watching the young men until the shadows of the night made it impossible to see them. Then he turned to the west. Night was coming, but the fiery red in the evening sky predicted that God would send a new day.

And a new Day.

The end. ❖

¹ Simon Van Velzen was one of the men who left the State Church with De Cock, Van Raalte, Brummelkamp, Scholte and Gezel-Merberg.

² After the Secession, the churches had many problems, some of which resulted in divisions and departures from the denomination.

Addendum for The Fourth Man

In this story free use is made of the scarce data and traditions that have been saved from this anxious time. That implies that most of this did not actually happen. The main persons are the product of the imagination. The tragic attack on the farm of Gijsbert Haan on June 12, 1836 is (alas) indeed an historical fact. However, similar acts of violence did occur in the Netherlands in those years.

In the present-day Hilversum there is very little of the old weaver's town left. Most of the houses and farms of that time have disappeared and many streets have been renamed.

On the Kerkbrink may still be found the old church tower (The church was replaced in 1891 with a larger one), the court house (now a civic information center), and the "Large Tavern" (now a hotel called "The courtyard of Holland"). Also the old toll house at the parting of the ways to Baarn and to Utrecht is still there (now a café). "De Jonghe Graaf van Buuren" is still being used. The wooden Hondenbrug was replaced in 1929 by a stone bridge, which still bears the same name. The burial place "Ponder dying," in which many persons mentioned in this story were buried, was closed in 1943 and soon will disappear.

Gijsbert Haan and his traveling companions reached the United States at the end of May or in the beginning of June 1847. They migrated to the state of Iowa, where Reverend Scholte established a colony.

Gijsbert Haan later resided in Grand Rapids, Michigan. There he played an important role in the organizing of the Christian Reformed Church in 1857.

Also Jan Roest did well in America and filled important offices.

After their bitter experiences in Hilversum Jan Hartog and his companions returned to Bunschoten. Two weeks later a Secession congregation was organized in this town. Reverend Buddingh ordained among others Jan Hartog as elder and instructor Beuker as deacon. At that occasion he also baptized the infant Bort Hartog and a small daughter of Jacob Baas. That took place in a cellar!

The Secessionists from Bunschoten were severely persecuted. They had soldiers billeted in their homes. The soldiers had orders to plague them as much as possible! This was referred to as a "Pleasant Household."

Instructor Beuker, county constable Koelewijn and the night watchman Nagel were fired from their positions.

Karssemeijer and Reijmerink, after their shameful treatment in the prison, were also summoned to the court in Amsterdam. The sentence read: one month in prison for Karssemeijer and two months for Reijmerink. However they appealed to the court in Den Haag, which diminished Karssemeijer's punishment to three days, because of "remarkable mitigating circumstances." Reijmerink was completely exonerated.

Reverend Buddingh was arrested in 1838, two years after he preached in Hilversum. The fines that were laid upon him because he preached in "forbidden" gatherings had by that time amounted to 40,000 guilders!

His household goods were sold and he himself spend seven years in prison in Middelburg.

In 1848 he also emigrated to the United States. Following that he completely broke away from the secessionists and went his own way. He died in 1870 in Goes.

Mayor Barend Andreissen and the town secretary, Albertus Perk, who played such a bad role in the Secession, were actually capable leaders. Accordingly, a street was named after both of them. There is also a street serving as a reminder of Dr. van Hengel.

After the Secession of 1834 there followed another withdrawal from the Hervormde Kerk in 1886: the

Doleante. In this the well-known Dr. Abraham Kuiper played an important role.

In 1892 the churches of the Secession and Doleantie joined together as the “Reformed Churches of the Netherlands.” All of the separated churches did not join with them: the Christian Reformed Churches.

Cornelis van Ravenswaay, a classmate of Maarten in this story, later became religion instructor in the Hervormde Kerk. His eyes were opened to the departure from God’s Word; therefore, after 1858, he arranged a gathering every Sunday afternoon or evening in a small building at the Kleine Krakebeen, the present Ruitersweg. Every visitor brought along his own chair.

The movement that bore the name “The Prayer meeting” existed for thirty years. Thus Cornelis van Ravenswaay prepared the way for the Doleantie on February 19, 1888. However he himself remained Hervormde until his death in 1900.

Constable Peter de Nooij died in 1876 at the age of 88 years. His wife Gerijsbertje Vlaanderen, who gave her tin cups and plates to the Secessionists, died in 1889 when she was 85 years old.

Her grandchild Alida de Nooij with her husband Dirk Kuiper chose for the Doleantie in full conviction. These were my great grandparents.

The author. ❖

Pastor Profile

Rev. Arie den Hartog (1)

edited by Kris Moelker

I have probably lived in more places during my life time than most people. This has made my life exciting. Most of all, I am thankful to the Lord for His providence and the many things I have learned and experienced in all of these places. I was born in the Netherlands in a small town called Lexmond. My family immigrated to Canada when I was just one year old. Life in Holland was difficult at the time we immigrated, and it seemed there was great promise, adventure and opportunity to immigrate to Canada. We settled in Canada near Edmonton, Alberta. We lived among a very large Dutch immigrant community, so I learned the Dutch language well. By the time I went to first grade, I still did not know one word of English. We had some very hard times in Canada. Our family was large and we were quite poor. Part of the time, my family homesteaded. When we were still in Holland, all of this seemed very exciting and opportunistic. Reality was quite different. The weather was extremely cold and the homestead was far from civilization. There were no roads to our homestead and, of course, no running water or electricity. Finally, when



we could endure it no longer, we moved to a farm near Edmonton where by father was employed by a farmer who was in a better financial situation than we were and managed to build up a large farm, at least for those times.

I am thankful that I was raised in a strong Reformed home. I never saw my father with any other book in his hands than a theology book. He did a lot of reading. Theology was often discussed in our home. Doctrinal issues being debated in the various Reformed denominations were often talked about in the home. We also

learned practical Godliness, love for the truth and love for the true church of the Lord. My mother especially was the great influence for Godliness in the years of my childhood. As a result, the church was always central in our lives as a family. The second result of this was that I felt very early already, in my mid teens, that I was called to the ministry and began to pray that the Lord would guide me and enable me to sustain the rigors of study and preparation for the ministry.

I can remember how very real peer pressure was in my teens. How often we went along just to be accepted and to re-

ceive the approval of our peers. How often we said and did things just for this reason, sometimes also wrong things that we were later ashamed of. It takes a lot of spiritual courage to be different even from your peers in the church when this is necessary for the Lord's sake. Often it was not considered very popular to be talking about wanting to be a minister later in life. Furthermore, there were high expectations that we did not always live up to. By the grace of God, we learned a lot as we grew up.

In 1964, we immigrated to the United States, to the state of Washington. I will not tell you the whole story of this. It all happened in part because of the ministers we talked to and friendships which were made by my father, with theologically inclined men who were one in the truth of God with him. Shortly after our immigration to the state of Washington, we came in contact with the Protestant Reformed Churches. This took place during the ministry of Rev. Bernard Woudenberg in Lynden, Washington. At the time, we were Christian Reformed.

Convinced of the call to the ministry, I left Washington in 1967 to study in Grand Rapids at Calvin College. Through the years I was at Calvin, I became more and more seriously troubled by the theological and even the philosophical and practical direction which the CRC was going in. Many people during these years had a wonderful influence in my life, for which I thank God. Rev. Woudenberg was one of these.

In 1970, I married my wonderful wife Sherry. We became acquainted with each other in the days when compulsory chapel attendance was still in affect at Calvin. We were assigned seats next to each other in the Fine Arts Auditorium where chapel was held. The Lord gave us love for each other which led to marriage the summer before our last year at Calvin. During the same year, I began to audit classes at the Theological School of the PRC which at the time was still meeting in the basement of First PRC on Fuller and Franklin. I attended the classes at the seminary which fit in to the schedule of classes at Calvin. During the third year of Calvin, I applied and was accepted in Calvin Seminary; but we were already in the Lord's providence, through the influence of several people as well as our family in Washington, being more and more drawn to the PRC. We began worshipping in First PRC during the time of the ministry of Rev. Gise Van Baren. Through all these factors, and after many prayers, Sherry and I came to the conviction that we must leave the CRC and join the PRCA.

I spent three wonderful years studying at the Theological School of the PRCA. The Lord more and more convinced me of the call to the ministry and also led me into an ever deeper love and appreciation for the heritage of the Reformed Faith which the Lord has given to the PRC. Lots of details could be told about this. How thrilled we were in those days at the sound instruction and preparation for the ministry we were receiving at the seminary, and how encouraged we were also by the preaching we heard each Lord's Day. We certainly enjoyed being in school with a number of other men preparing for the ministry and we had some great times together. I still have the nostalgic memories of classes in First Church basement. I can remember that in some classes I was the only student. You really had to be prepared for every class. There was no hope of someone else being called on to read their assignments. I could write a long story about the fears and rigors of practice preaching. Sometimes you would think you had a good sermon, but it would be torn to shreds by professors and students and humbly you would have to pick up the pieces and try to reconstruct another sermon. But when you had a passable sermon, at least you could preach it sometimes as many as ten times in all different congregations.

What a joy to sit at the feet of our professors and learn from them. I often imagined how different it would all have been had I studied at Calvin. What kind of minister of the Word would I then have become? The Lord gave us the opportunity to receive a training in sound doctrine which would immensely benefit me during all the years of my ministry.

The summer after I graduated from Seminary, I was asked to help the new small congregation founded in New Jersey. When I sustained the synodical examination of the PRC and was declared a Candidate for the ministry, the congregation of Covenant PRC in New Jersey called me to be their first pastor.

Our first years in the ministry were wonderful, but there was also so much learning and developing to do as a minister. Many mistakes were made, and I struggled and labored with my own personal weaknesses while serving as a minister of the Word of God and pastor of the flock of God placed under our care. We did learn to love our first congregation very dearly.

(to be continued in December) ❖

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

Watching Daily At My Gates

by Chester Hunter
reprinted from November 1993 *Beacon Lights*

November 1 Read Proverbs 21:1-9

In these verses a king by the name of Lemuel is advised not to drink strong drink. The reason given is that it will pervert his judgment as he rules the country. If this is true of a leader, it must also be true of those less able in judgment. This is not to say that alcohol must be left alone altogether. Paul gives Timothy advice to drink a little wine. Wine enjoyed by the believer can be the picture of the joys of salvation. But there are several passages which warn against the misuse of alcohol. As children of God we must use all that God has given us with discretion. The use of alcohol is no different. Sing or read Psalter 322.

November 2 Read Psalm 147:12-20

One idea that we forget easily is that it is God who sends all kinds of weather. We are quick to say it is raining or snowing or sunny. We forget the words of this Psalm which tell the truth that by the words of God's mouth the winds of summer or winter send for all kinds of weather. We must remember this when the tornado destroys our home or farm. We must remember this when the flood waters cause us to evacuate from our homes. We must remember this when the snowstorm alters our plans or even strands us. All of these things are in God's hand and are done for our good. Let us constantly look at the weather and say with the Psalmist, "Praise ye the Lord." Sing or read Psalter 402, especially stanzas 1, 3, 5 and 6.

November 3 Read Ruth 1:1-5: 19-22

Young people, are you tired of the church in which God has placed you? (I am assuming that you are in a church where the Word is purely preached. If you are not in such a church, you should be tired of it.) Does something want to make you leave your church? Is it a possible husband, wife, job, or a dislike of the way the church does things? If this is true of you, consider

Elimelech and Naomi. Because of a famine in Israel, the picture of heaven, they left the church. While outside the church, all of the family died except for Naomi. When Naomi returns, she realizes that Almighty's bitter dealings with her were because of her sin. She even wished to change her name. Do not fall into this temptation, covenant young people. Hold fast to what you have been taught and receive the blessings of Jehovah. Sing or read Psalter 228.

November 4 Read Jeremiah 46: 1-12

Israel had to arm herself for war and go and fight against Egypt. This was during a time when they were not very strong. The church today has the same calling. We do not fight physically, but we must arm ourselves with the weapons of faith and fight against spiritual Egypt which is the wicked world. This calling comes at a time when we may not be so spiritually strong. Look at the church world around you; look at your church; look at you. Are your weapons strong? Is your Bible knowledge what it should be? It won't get any better unless you practice it. Sing or read Psalter 329.

November 5 Read Luke 12:13-31

As we are finishing the harvest season, it is well that we consider the picture Christ puts before us in these words. What are you putting aside for days to come? Is it just the harvest of earthly things? Are you making so sure that your education, work, family, or other earthly concerns are well cared for that you are ignoring the things of the kingdom? This starts with your own Bible study, extends to attendance at some Bible study group, and branches out into whatever kingdom work God calls you. If we concern ourselves with the spiritual, God will give us all the physical we require. Sing or read Psalter 331.

November 6 Read Job 19:21-29

Job has come to the depths of his despair. His body reeks with the sickness given him by Satan. Most of his friends have left him. Those that do remain have no comfort for him. In all of this Job is able to say the words of verses 25-27. What about you, young people? If you are in despair, are you able to confess the truth of your Redeemer? Do you want to see God now? Earthly things will pass away but the heavenly is eternal. Sing or read Psalter 54.

November 7 Read Mark 7:31-37

Jesus did many miracles while He was on the earth. After some of these, He told the healed not to tell any man. He told this man as well, but the man and his friends could not hold in the good news. What about us? We have been the recipients of the greatest miracle ever. We have been healed from the ravages of sin. Do we hold in the gospel? Christ does charge us to spread the good news. How can we not obey this command? Sing or read Psalter 197.

November 8 Read Joel 3:1-13

Even in the Old Testament the children of God were taught to look ahead until the time of Christ's final coming. Verse ten is very interesting. There is a verse in Isaiah (2:4) which says the opposite, and many world leaders like to use it to show what will happen if all the world looks for peace. This verse shows the reality for the church. God's people will face oppression in the days to come. We do not have to despair according to verses 16-20. God will fight for us and takes us to the new Jerusalem. Thanks be to God! Sing or read Psalter 181.

November 9 Read Matthew 9:27-38

Jesus used His miracles to gather His people to Him. Blind, deaf, dumb, lame, and those with many other infirmities were healed by faith. Jesus not only had compassion for their bodies, but he also had compassion for their souls. He used this opportunity to teach His disciples and us the truth that laborers are needed in the kingdom. Are you praying for this great work? Are you searching your heart to see what God's will is for you in this area? Sing or read Psalter 167.

November 10 Read Jonah 3

Jonah was called to preach to the people of Nineveh. He had to proclaim the gospel to these people. A huge revival went on, led by the king. True, most of the repentance was lip-service only, but there were God's people there, and God's word never returns to him void. God's people repented and God's anger was turned from them. We must pray that God's word may be preached

in all places so that His people may hear His word and repent. Sing or read Psalter 198, especially stanzas 1, 2, 6 and 7.

November 11 Read Jonah 4

Assyria, of which Nineveh was captive, was the mortal enemy of Israel. Jonah was not pleased when God did not destroy the city. So God had to show Jonah that His work was more important than Jonah's desires. We, too, need the same admonitions. We must learn that the will of God concerning His kingdom work is more important than our own desires. We must realize that God calls His people from every tribe, tongue, and people. We must be enthusiastic about such work wherever it is to take place. Sing or read Psalter 200.

November 12 Read Philippians 3:7-13

In the first six verses of this chapter, Paul recounts the things he had done before his conversion. He now realizes that these things were not for his profit. We, like Paul, must realize that only things that count for gain are the things of Christ. We must know Christ not by our works but by faith which brings us true righteousness. It can be hard for us to realize that we do nothing for our salvation, but that fact is the truth of Scripture. Sing or read Psalter 358, especially stanzas 1 and 2.

November 13 Read Philippians 3:14-21

Young people are you pressing toward the mark? Are you like the marathon runner who is still running hard even after twenty-five miles? Is the mark you press for the high calling of God? Is it to live a life with a goal towards heaven? Do you realize that to live such a life has a prize worth gaining? By answering those questions with a yes, you place yourself in the very small company of the people of God. If you say no, you place yourself with the great company of Satan's followers. Which will it be, young people? Sing or read Psalter 361.

November 14 Read Joshua 10:7-14

Have you ever been through a storm that was so bad that you thought this was the greatest storm ever? You never have unless you were on the battlefield with Joshua that day when God made the sun and the moon stand still and more died with God's hailstones than with Israel's swords. Yet as we go through storms, we can be reminded of God's judgments. For us He tells the consequences of our sins. For the wicked it is a picture of Hell. Listen to God and hear His message in the storms around us. Sing or read Psalter 285.

November 15 Read Revelation 21:1-7

What a beautiful word of comfort is found in verse seven! We are called the sons of God! For what else could we wish? Verse four explains the blessedness of this fact. All our tears will be wiped away; all our sorrows will vanish. We will join with the company of the saints praising our heavenly Father eternally. Let us overcome the evil one and pray for the day of Christ's return. Sing or read Psalter 170.

November 16 Read Lamentations 5

Jeremiah in this final chapter once more mourns Israel's state. He portrays their utter hopelessness and despair. He knows that this state was caused by the sin of the fathers. But Jeremiah speaks words of comfort. We can find these in verse nineteen. The Jehovah who had carried out this extreme chastisement would also remember His promise to David. Jeremiah knew this. He would not see it, but he knew the day would come. We, too, must know that Jehovah's kingdom is eternal and He will bring it to pass. Sing or read Psalter 354, especially stanzas 1 and 4-6.

November 17 Read Romans 5:1-11

What a truth is brought forth in these verses! Justification by faith through Jesus Christ. This truth can bring us much happiness and peace in this world of sin and despair. Through this justification we have patience, we experience God's goodness, and we have the hope of eternal life. All of this is free for the people of God. All of this should bring forth continual expression of joy. Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift. Sing or read Psalter 372.

November 18 Read Leviticus 10:1-7

Did you offer strange fire upon God's altar yesterday? Was your worship not pleasing to Jehovah? If you did, or if it wasn't you are in danger of the fate of Nadab and Abihu. These men did not want to carry out God's commands with respect to worship. They felt they could do it their way. God alone is to be glorified in worship. If we worship any other way, we commit the sin of Nadab and Abihu. This admonition should not cause us not to want to worship, but rather it should inspire us to worship in a way that is only God-glorifying. Sing or read Psalter 109.

November 19 Read Titus 2:9-15

Some of the servants of Titus's day were slaves who were bound to their masters. To these and to all who work for someone else Titus had to bring the word to be faithful in work. That is the calling for the Christian worker today. Whether you are a student or a worker or

both, you must be faithful in your work so that God's truth is shown in us. That is a solemn calling to think about as we work, isn't it? We must please our employers in all things not with eye service but with well-done work. This will also please our heavenly Father. Sing or read Psalter 385.

November 20 Read Malachi 2:1-10

One of the concepts we hold dear is that of the office of all believers. In that concept is the idea that we are priests. We must bring our sacrifices of praise, and we must show mercy to God's people in whatever way we can. What are we doing with that idea? Are we merciful to all of God's people, or are we guilty of the sin found in verses 8-10? We confess God to be our Father each day as we pray. Do we confess God to be our Father in our daily walk? Let us pray for God's help in this matter and carry out our office faithfully. Sing or read Psalter 44.

November 21 Read Micah 7:15-20

Micah confesses that Jehovah is the God of Israel. He then asks God to feed Israel even as he knows that He will. He says, 'Who is a God like unto thee?' Why does he say this? He knows that God will forgive Israel's sin and restore them back into the beauty of covenant life. He knows that Jehovah is compassionate toward His people. Do we have this knowledge as well? Are we confident in the sure mercies of Jehovah even when we fall into sin? We should be, as we read in His word of those mercies. Let us cling to them by faith even as we go about our daily walk. Sing or read Psalter 218, especially stanzas 1, 3 and 6.

November 22 Read Nahum 2:1-13

Nahum had to bring the word of Jehovah to Judah during a very sad time. Judah had been afflicted by many nations. In the first chapter Nahum reminded Israel of God's goodness and encouraged them to listen to the messengers sent by God. In the final two chapters Judah is told that God is against all wickedness and will destroy all of His enemies who warred against the church. This is our comfort as well. The enemies of God who seem to bring havoc to the church will be destroyed in Hell for their sins against God's people. Sing or read Psalter 155.

November 23 Read Nehemiah 1

Nehemiah received word that things were not going well in Israel after the return from captivity. He became very sorrowful over this fact. He did not sit and mope over the situation. He wept, mourned, fasted, and prayed to God. Notice his last activity. Isn't that much different

than Esther when she received bad news? How do we react to bad news about the church? Do we care at all? Do we shrug our shoulders over it? Do we wring our hands in despair? Or are we like Nehemiah and fall on our knees in prayer for God's church? Sing or read Psalter 152.

November 24 Read Deuteronomy 16:9-17

In these few verses we have recorded two feasts that were to be kept by Israel. A key element in both of these feasts was thanksgiving. In the feast of weeks, they were to thank God for the harvest He was giving them. In the feast of the tabernacles, they would remember not only the harvest, but how God had led them through the wilderness to Canaan. They were called to rejoice because God had blessed them. This should be our attitude as well, even as we approach the National Thanksgiving Day. We should rejoice in the blessings, both physical and spiritual, with which we have been blessed by God. Sing or read 378.

November 25 Read I Chronicles 16:1-10

The occasion of this chapter is the bringing of the ark to Jerusalem. In the Old Dispensation the ark was the symbol of Jehovah's presence. Since the time of Eli, the ark had not been in the tabernacle. Shortly after David became king, he desired that the ark be brought and used correctly. After a first disastrous attempt, the ark was brought to Jerusalem with great joy. David worshiped, appointed choirs to sing God's praises, and wrote an inspired Psalm to commemorate this event. The main point of this Psalm was that God is good to His people and must be thanked. Is that the main point of our thanksgiving this week? Sing or read Psalter 256, especially stanzas 1-3 and 5.

November 26 Read I Chronicles 16:7-14

My Bible has the note that this is a psalm of thanksgiving. The first part of the psalm commands us to thank the Lord. It tells us to call upon His name, to sing His songs, to talk of His wondrous works, and to remember all that He has done. We do this because we are His people. We do this because He is our God. Do you do this, young people, daily? Is God in your thoughts throughout the day and week? Are the songs of Zion heard from your mouths? Do you SING them? Sing or read Psalter 250, especially stanzas 1 and 2.

November 27 Read I Chronicles 16:15-27

The next part of this psalm of thanksgiving concerns itself with the glorious idea of the covenant. We must thank God for this great benefit. God has established this covenant with believers and their seed. In the cov-

enant He protects us from the wicked world. Because of the covenant we establish schools founded on God's love. Because of this we are commanded to sing unto Him, to declare His glory to the world, and to show forth His salvation daily. We do this because He is our God. Sing or read Psalter 262.

November 28 Read I Chronicles 16:28-36

Will you give unto God the glory due to His name today? Will you bring an offering in thanksgiving even as you worship? Will you worship before Him in true thanksgiving? These are the commands of our reading today. Why must we do these things? We do them because the Lord is good and His mercy endureth forever. Notice the word mercy. We must be thankful for the physical good things from our God, but more importantly we must be thankful for the goodness of salvation. Reread verses 34-36 today as we celebrate Thanksgiving. Sing or read Psalter 376, especially stanzas 1, 2 and 6.

November 29 Read Numbers 21:4-9

Let us look a little closer at this familiar incident in Israel's history. Israel rebelled against the leaders God had given them. But worse than that, they rebelled against the way God was leading them. What makes this worse is that this incident comes after the forty-year wandering in the wilderness! There is much comfort in this passage as well. First of all we see confession of sin. When God chastised them, they came and said, "We have sinned." Then we see the way of salvation. In John 3:14 we read, "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up." What a lesson is set forth for our edification! Sing or read Psalter 142.

November 30 Read Obadiah 1-9

One of the sins which besets all mankind as well as the individual child of God is that of pride. Pride is the setting ourselves up over God and His commandments. It was pride that caused the building of the tower of Babel. It was pride that caused many rebellions in the wilderness. It was pride that caused Esau to despise his birthright; and later his descendants, Edom, to despise the people of God. It is pride which causes us to put aside God's requirements in our lives and replace them with our own desires. Verse three speaks to the sin of pride. Even though this is directed to Edom, we can take much instruction from these words of the Holy Spirit. God will bring our pride to naught and along with our pride our desires. We must pray and ask that we be delivered from this great sin. Sing or read Psalter 235.

High Importance: Instructing Our Youth in Psalms

by Melissa Van Baren

While Sunday school was in session this summer, I was reminded of the importance of teaching our children the psalms. It is the most glorious and encouraging thing as a teacher to see those children, even that of the youngest ones being able to sing the psalms. It brings tears to your eyes when the 3-4 year olds are able to sing in along with the older children and not only that but in their small minds able to comprehend some of the meanings.

Teaching is a most wonderful and awesome undertaking. It is my hope that this article serves to encourage the teachers and parents and also remind each one of us of the importance of teaching our children the love of Christ and singing His glories and praise. It is an awesome and fearful undertaking to teach the children in the ways of Christ especially with the thought in mind that those precious little people are the future of the church and are going to take your place in the standings of the church. The calling to train them correctly is a great one, yet we can be thankful that it is one directed by God.

It is so hard at times to see the children struggle with the words because they don't know them. It is a fearful thing to think that they may someday grow and not know those psalms because we didn't have the time or didn't make the time to teach them. Our fast paced, rushing world is detrimental to the church in her teaching of the young. Mothers, fathers, grandparents and even teachers rushing off to this and that and not really taking the time to teach the children. "Not enough time" they say, "too busy." Then they point the finger and say it is someone else's job to do it. Teachers saying, "that is the parent's duty in the home." Parents saying, "that's what I pay the teacher for." No one really taking up the slack and checking into things.

Ideally, the learning of psalms should be reinforced wherever the children are. Teachers must see to it that they reinforce what is being taught at home, and parents

must show an interest in the learning of their children in school. This is exactly what we are to be doing when teaching the children the psalms of praise to our God! Our elders and board members also need to ensure that such things are being taught and reinforced.

As a body of believers, we also are to be praying for God's guidance in the lives of the children that we will show through our love and teaching the love and ways of God, so that they too will grow to love God as deeply as we do. What a horrific thing if that were to be lost because we were "too busy." We are to be accountable to God in the end for the teaching of these wee ones. We must be prepared to say to God that we taught them to the fullest of our ability.

The Bible speak urgently of the calling to instruct children in the psalms. Here are only a few of the many Psalter numbers that speak of the singing of children.

Psalter 90 vs 6 says "Ye children, come and hear my voice, And learn to make God's fear your choice; Who seek long life and happy days must learn to walk in wisdom's ways."

Also, especially in Psalter 213 vs 1,2 and 3 "My people, give ear, attend to my word, in parables new deep truths shall be heard; The wonderful story our fathers made known to children succeeding by us must be shown. Instructing our sons we gladly record the praises the works, the might of the Lord, For He hath commanded that what He hath done be passed in tradition from father to son. Let children thus learn from history's light to hope in our God and walk in His sight, The God of our Fathers to fear and obey and ne'er like there fathers to turn from His ways."

Lastly though, there is the promise of God in Psalter 215 vs. 6 "Let children learn God's righteous ways and on Him stay their heart, that they may not forget His works nor from His ways depart." What a glorious promise we have when we teach God's children: they will not depart from His ways. What encouragement to those that

teach the elect children God's ways. This a wonderful thought to those teachers that get discouraged with all those wiggly worms in Sunday school. It also gives teaches in the schools renewed vigor for the school year. And parents what an awesome statement and calling for you! What a promise! Teach your children the ways of God and reinforce what they learn at school. Do your family devotions with them. Sing those psalms with them. Do not be discouraged. Pray to God for that strength and wisdom needed to raise those children. Pray to God that through your instruction and shining love your children too will see the wonderful ways of God and want to break forth in Psalms that you have taught them!

“Teach me, O Lord, Thy way of truth, and from it I will not depart; that I may steadfastly obey, Give me and understanding heart. In Thy commandments make me walk, for in Thy law my joy shall be; Give me a heart that loves Thy will, From discontent and envy free. Turn Thou my eyes from vanity, and cause me in Thy steps to tread; O let Thy servant prove Thy word and thus to godly fear be led. Turn Thou away reproach and fear; Thy righteous judgments I confess; to know Thy precepts I desire, revive me in Thy righteousness” (Psalter 325). ❖

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Church Family

I Have a Dream... of Charity and Love Above All Else

by Trisha Haak

In the eyes of the world there is nothing worse than being labeled as a racist person. To the world, being racist means being ignorant, not understanding that all human life, regardless of skin color, is precious. Racism is slowly becoming the fad of yesterday.

And it's simply because after thousands of years of racism and bigotry, the world is fed up with prejudice thinking. They're ashamed of a history that includes such acts as the genocide of the Native Americans, the slavery and deculturization of the African Americans, the horrors and violence of the Holocaust, and hundreds of other acts that are now seen as barbaric and inhumane. These crimes, along with Eastern philosophy and the New Age religion, have pushed the flow of modern thinking into a new direction that differs from the old school of thought. Now "civil rights" has become the mantra of the 21st century.

I've heard the reasoning of the world. I know their statements of why racism, bigotry and prejudice are wrong. I've been to a concentration camp and I've seen the ovens. I've heard the warning to the people of today

that those who forget the past are condemned to repeat and I've heard the promise to 6 million and more who died there that it will never happen again. I've read the books on how the KKK rose out of a defeated Confederacy with a wounded pride and tarred and feathered, plundered, raped, and killed while justice turned its head the other way because, more than likely, the man underneath the white hood was the town sheriff, judge, and/or barber. I've studied how a woman named Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat and because of that Martin Luther King Jr. had a dream and walked to Washington before a racist shot him down in a hotel in Memphis, Tennessee. I know the history of it all backwards and forwards, upside-down and over because it's been spoon-fed to me since I can remember. Yet I never remember being given a reason as to why racism is wrong in the life of a Christian.

And it is wrong. This isn't a gray area where anyone can give his opinion. The attitude that certain people are better than others based on their skin color is wrong for one simple and fundamental reason. When you use a

slang term for a person of another ethnic group or refer to them as inferior, what you are doing, in essence, is placing your confidence in your flesh.

The words “nigger, spic, and diego” were not invented for white people to use as terms of respect. Nor were they created for white people to show their humility. They were invented because people thought these groups to be sub-human, unintelligent, and a waste of space. They used these terms because they believed that white people were superior and a little closer to heaven because of it. They believed that the color of their skin was the real ticket to heaven and that their faith wasn't really a gift from God but rather an inheritance from a long ancestry of “righteous believers.” And this attitude is something that has been passed down through the generations. Yet where is this in the Bible? Aren't we told that our flesh is weak, corruptible, and filthy in the eyes of God (Romans 8:18)? Tell me this. Can you really look at the black skin of your neighbor in disgust and not see the blackened condition of your own soul?

The Holy Spirit knows what black truly is. He sent Philip to witness to an Ethiopian eunuch. A black man! And what more, a eunuch! Yet notice Philip's reaction. There was none. He didn't stumble, or fall, or trip over his own two feet because he couldn't believe that the Spirit would send him to a black man. Nor did he call him a racial slur, use a derogatory term, and complain that all Ethiopians are on welfare and don't know how to drive. Instead he kept running and, by doing this, proved that he was running a higher course for the word of God, never putting confidence in his flesh or the color of his skin that he knew all too well would fade away.

Philip's reaction of placing his confidence in the arms of Christ is something that we lack too often. We stumble and trip over our own two feet because of bitter experiences and disappointing confrontations that we covet and nourish inside our minds like precious flowers. However, look closer, because these precious flowers are actually suffocating weeds. And they are weeds that feed off of Christian love and charity and impair our vision.

Yet Christ sees so clearly, so perfectly, beyond any skin color or race. He saw the Samaritan woman at the well perfectly. As far as race goes, there wasn't an ethnic group more looked down upon than the Samaritans. They were the outcasts of the Jews who were outcasts themselves. Yet Jesus ignored the racial boundaries and prejudice of that time. He came to preach a New Gospel “where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision or

uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ is all, and in all” (Colossians 3:11). He preached of this Living Bread to the woman at the well. He told this woman, the underdog of humanity, of words so beautiful that they surpass the most beautiful object we have ever beheld. By preaching to this woman, Christ left us an example that gives no excuse for hate or bigotry.

Paul reveals to the Romans that “love worketh no ill in his neighbor (Romans 13:10).” Furthermore, he tells us to “mind not high things but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits (Romans 12:16).” The Psalmist David says, “Do not I hate them, O lord, that hate thee...I hate them with a perfect hatred: I count them mine enemies (Psalm 139:21-22).” He hates God's enemies and nothing more. He never says he hates those of a certain skin color, only *God's* enemies.

There are countless texts in the Bible where God commands us to be humble. For example: “Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth.” Matthew 5:5. But you can't have it both ways. You can't be meek and humble yet think that people of a different race are inferior to you. You can't inherit the earth by thinking that you are better than other people on the earth. Bitter and sweet waters can't come out of the same fountain (James 3:11)!

But it's not an easy thing to do, because as human creatures we rely so greatly on our perception. In fact, almost every confrontation that we have with a person from another ethnic group is shaped, or rather, distorted, by our perception. We see a black guy walking down the street and we wonder what crime he is about to commit. We see a Hispanic person and we wonder if they have their green card. In truth, we rely too greatly on our perception. The dictionary defines it as the act of being aware of something directly by the senses especially in hearing or seeing. Haven't we learned that the senses of our body are of the physical? Do you really think it's wise to rely on your perception that is distorted by your human nature? I can't help it that you've had a bad experience with a person of another ethnic group and neither can you! But you can help the attitude that will dictate the rest of your actions. Don't let your compassion cease because you have had one bad experience or because you've had a thousand. You're so busy holding onto your perceptions with whited knuckles that you can't see your own faith slipping out of your hands. Let go of your perceptions because they are earthy!

Abandon your prejudice thinking because the word of God cannot and will not take root in the stony garden of your heart!

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It's time for us to stop acting this way because whether we are a mother, father, son, or daughter, friend, acquaintance or co-worker, we set an example to those around us. And how powerful and deadly our examples can be! Historians have often wondered how the nation of Germany was so willing to follow Hitler into the Holocaust. The crimes committed at the Holocaust were of such a grotesque nature that no one can understand how so many people were willing to participate in such acts. Yet I'll tell you how. What Hitler said in his speeches against the Jewish race wasn't anything that those people hadn't heard before. They heard it at the dinner table when their father complained about a friend who had lost a job to a Jew. They heard it in the school yard when their friends used dirty names against the Jews. They were fed such small doses of this racism that when they came into contact with the disease itself they were already immune to it. This was the foundation that the Devil used to build a world of murder, hate, and violence.

When you use racial terms or cut down people based on their skin color, you use the very tools that the Devil uses against the church. Right now there are only whispers of it throughout the world, only hints of hatred towards a religion that is viewed as old-fashioned and intolerant. Yet one day those whispers will become shouts. They will become the creeds and the anthems of a country named Babylon and the Hispanic and the black man will no longer be the ethnic minority. You will be the ethnic minority. Don't you think it's a little ironic to use the very tools that the Devil will use against the Bride of Christ? Racism and bigotry certainly aren't the tools of the Holy Spirit.

Tell me who is more ignorant: the man on welfare who doesn't know how to drive or the man who lusts after the things of this world even though he knows of His lowly birth, His state of humiliation, and His de-

scend into Hell that guaranteed that His elect would never have to suffer that themselves? Who is more ignorant: the man who can't speak English or the one who repeatedly gives his life to the corruptible things of this world even though he has read the Good News of salvation that was bought at a bitter price of sweat, blood, and tears because He was forsaken by God so that we might never be?

You say they are ignorant and dumb. I say look in a mirror. You say they are a waste of space and they smell. I say look within. Ignorance comes in every shape and size. And there is no greater ignorance than that of a Christian who knows of the agony that Christ suffered to ransom His people from death and yet constantly sells his soul to the Devil for thirty pieces of silver because he can't let go of this world.

I'm not asking you to join the NAACP nor am I asking you to join in Martin Luther King's dream. We don't join the things of this world because we are not of this world. We are merely strangers who must bless those that curse us. We are only pilgrims who show love in all things because of the amazing love that was given to us when the only thing we deserved was to be cut off from that love for all eternity.

Make the prayer of David your prayer too. Desire that God recreate your heart and renew your spirit (Psalm 51:10). Then this will be the only conclusion that a Christian can come to. For the children: racial words and jokes will only stifle your relationship with God because if you can't love the neighbor who you can see how much more can you love the One who you can't see (I John 4:20)?

For mothers and fathers: an attitude of racial superiority isn't the heritage that we were meant to give our children. God desires that we show our children His promise to Abraham and what He sacrificed to fulfill that promise to a people who were never truly faithful to Him. This ancestry that we are a part of, this song that is our lives, is more precious than the purest white Dutch ancestry. It is a heritage of mercy and of judgment. It is a song of eternal life and a poem of eternal love.

For every Christian: don't live your life in racial pride. If you do, you risk hearing the words "depart from me, I never knew you." Don't place your confidence in your corruptible flesh lest one day you look up and see that the hand writing on the wall has weighed you and has found you wanting. ❖

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

Federation Board Update

by Trevor Kalsbeck

Another year has come to a close and a new one has started. We look forward to the new year and getting the new members involved. There are many questions that arise which hopefully I will be able to give an answer to. What is the Federation Board? What is its purpose? In writing this article we hope to clearly state what exactly the Federation Board is and who is involved.

Many people have heard about the Federation Board, but do not know what goes on behind the scenes. The main purpose of the Federation Board is to get the young people of our congregations involved with one another. We establish activities and events to foster this involvement. We work to organize mass meetings, singspirations, and conventions. It is in our best interest as members of the Fed. Board to get societies to work in close unity one with another.

Another way we work to foster unity and fellowship among young people is through the work of the *Beacon Lights*. *Beacon Lights* is a branch of the Federation Board that exists to encourage the development of faith and doctrine in the young people by providing sound reading material. Such work requires writers willing to contribute and spend time helping covenant youth. We are thankful for all the time and energy given to the publication.

The last and most important purpose of the Federation Board is that we give united expression to our Protestant Reformed character and walk. We are to express ourselves by our walk and confession being in unity one with another.

Who is involved in the Fed. Board? We have lost a few members and gained a few this year, and on behalf of the Fed. Board, we express our thanks to those who are leaving: Corey Terpstra (President), Maria Bodbyl (Secretary), Nathan Yonker (Treasurer), Brad Duistermars (Youth Coordinator), and Rev. Slopsema (Spiritual Advisor). Their hard work and diligent labor was greatly appreciated.

Those who were elected at the delegate meeting this past convention were mentioned in an earlier *Beacon Lights* article, but just to refresh your memory they are as follows:

Vice-President, Kevin Gritters, son of Rev. Barry and Lori Gritters. He is a member of Hudsonville PRC, and has served as the President of the Young People's Society. He attends Calvin College and is working to become a civil engineer. He is working at Prein and Newhof this summer as an overseer inspector. He is 19 years old.

Vice-Secretary, Rachel Kuiper, daughter of Clare and Jan Kuiper. She is a member of Hope PRC. She graduated from Covenant Christian High School in 2001 and is now working as a secretary at Kleyn Electric. She hopes to see the Fed. Board work more closely with the Young Peoples' Societies throughout the coming year.

Vice-Treasurer, Brad VanderVeen, son of Ralph and Cindy VanderVeen. He is 20 years old and a member of Hudsonville PRC. He is currently taking classes at GVSU, pursuing a degree in engineering. Brad would like to see more coalition between the Young Peoples' Societies throughout the season.

Youth Coordinator, Mr. Jim Holstege, is the father of four children and is a member of Southeast PRC. He has worked in agriculture all of his life and currently runs his own flower and perennial business with his wife, Kathy. He has led the Young Peoples' Society on and off for 7 years. He has also spent three years on the scholarship committee. He would like to see more of the older members in the Young Peoples' Societies to provide leadership for the younger members.

Spiritual Advisor, Rev. Barry Gritters has been a pastor at Hudsonville PRC since 1994.

We welcome the new members to the Federation Board and pray God's blessing upon them as they begin this work.

Trevor is currently the president of the Federation Board and is a member of Faith Protestant Reformed Church in Jenison, Michigan.

Finding Fulgurites

by Deane Wassink

I have looked and looked for fulgurites with no success up to this point in time. One of these days I am going to find a beautiful specimen. Sadly, I have probably been in the vicinity of this elusive creature without knowing it was there. Have you ever seen one? Do you know what a fulgurite is? I call this a creature because the Creator of the heavens and earth makes fulgurites in the most fascinating way. If you know something about Latin you might have guessed. “Fulgur” means lightning.

Lightning is a fascinating study in itself. Lest I steal my own thunder for a later article, I’ll be brief here. Lightning strikes the earth about one hundred times a second. It is the movement of the positive and negative charges of electricity in the air between clouds or from the clouds to the ground. The strokes of lightning travel at the speed of light 186,282 miles per second. They discharge about a hundred million volts of electricity and heat the air in their path to more than sixty thousand degrees F.

When lightning strikes sand or certain kinds of rocks the tremendous heat melts the material in its path. When the melted material solidifies it creates a permanent record of the passing of the lightning. It creates a “tube” of natural glass that is called a fulgurite. In the dunes the loose sand around this “tube” can be blown away by the wind or washed away with the rain to expose the fulgurite.

Fulgurites are like tubes of the finest blown glass, and just as delicate. A kind and helpful naturalist from the Indiana Dunes State Park allowed me to examine closely several specimens that were discovered there. The outside had a bubbly gray look. It felt like sandpaper because sand grains were imbedded in the outside of the tube, which was an inch or less in diameter and thin as paper. The inside is smooth rippled glass. Apparently, the lightning hits the ground and melts its way deeper and deeper. Then, the tube seems to shrink slightly as the molten glass solidifies. The fulgurites resemble two to three foot long icicles with a similar meandering shape. Their diameter is typically from one-half to two inches, which the scientists say is the size of a bolt of lightning.

It is amazing to think that all the brilliance and power of lightning is focused in such a small diameter of energy.

Because they are so fragile, fulgurites are usually broken when they are found. Sometimes they can be dug out and preserved by working very carefully. They are so fragile that they disappear when they are blasted by the blowing sand. They can be broken like a fragile glass Christmas ornament. Perhaps you can now understand how difficult it is to find fulgurites in the dunes. I wonder if I walked over them in years past before I knew they existed? One of these days I hope to find a beauty! Until then, I’ll keep looking.

Fulgurite

*A fulgurite a rare thing is,
A hidden treasure, easy to miss.
Looking, I've cast my eye around,
Yet, it's elusive and can't be found.*

*I'm told they're found on the dunes crest,
To look on the one higher than the rest.
I think it's because they're closer to heaven there,
As the Lord reached down to show us His care.*

*Only He such a delicate creature can make,
As the sky and the earth around shakes;
By touching the earth with His finger,
A sign of His passing before us lingers.*

*Like delicate blown glass, gray in color,
The fulgurite looks and feels like no other.
Often sought, but rarely found,
Till, its Maker uncovers it in the ground.*

*The Lord another treasure makes from the earth,
Compared to the fulgurite of much greater worth.
With His finger He causes the dust to raise,
In awesome wonder reveals a saint to His praise.*

My family wonders what I would do with a fulgurate if I did find one. (Kind of like the dog finally catching the car he has been chasing.) Admittedly, part of the fun is the chase. The thrill of discovery would be exciting, too. My intention would be to put my discovery in a display case for others to see. That way others could be amazed by and rejoice at this beautiful and unique glasswork made by the finger of the Creator Himself. Then, they too, could wonder at the greatness of the God we serve.

It seems to me that one of the primary reasons why we are to study and learn about the creation around us is for the purpose of witnessing. Learning about the wonders of the world around us gives us a connection point to talk about the Creator of that wonder and the greatest Wonder, Jesus Christ. We should never take that revelation for granted. Shame on us if we fail to pass on the excitement of studying the creation to our children. ❖

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

Where We Stand

Dispensationalism (I)

by Rev. Ronald Hanko

Dispensationalism, also known as Darbyism (after John Darby, the founder both of Dispensationalism and of the Brethren movement), Brethrenism, and Scofieldism, is the most serious of all errors regarding the millennium. In fact, it is not just a certain teaching about the millennium and the future, but a whole erroneous theological system.

The name comes from the fact that Dispensationalism divides history into different “dispensations” in each of which God has a different covenant relation with men, each of which ends with man’s failure to meet God’s requirements. We are now, according to classic Dispensationalism, in the “church age” or dispensation of grace, with only one more dispensation to come, that of the kingdom.

Rather than give a lengthy and detailed description of Dispensationalism, however, we suggest that those of our readers who are unacquainted with its teachings or want a lengthier critique than is offered in these articles, write us for the booklet, *Dispensationalism*. We have limited quantities of this booklet.

Some of Dispensationalism’s errors we have already dealt with, i.e.:

(1) its teaching regarding a secret, pre-millennial, pre-tribulation rapture.

(2) its teaching regarding multiple comings of Christ. Some of its teachings we will, God willing, deal with in future articles, i.e.:

1. its belief in multiple resurrections and judgements.
2. its literalist interpretation of Scripture, especially Revelation 20.

The other principal errors of Dispensationalism are: (1) its method of interpreting Scripture, the end result of which is that the whole Old Testament and some of the New Testament are applied to the Jews, and have no application to New Testament Christians except perhaps as an object of curiosity. The Scofield Bible teaches, for example, that the Sermon on the Mount is not Christian but Jewish. This is contrary to the teaching of Scripture that *all Scripture* is profitable (and applicable) to New Testament Christians (Jn. 10:35; II Tim. 3:16, 17). It is in this connection especially that Dispensationalism has been accused of “wrongly dividing the Word of truth” (cf. II Tim. 2:15), though it claims the opposite.

(2) its strict literalism, which, as one writer points out, is really the literalism of the Pharisees, who could not and would not see that Christ is a *spiritual* King and so crucified Him. This strict (though inconsistently applied) literalism, and opposition to “spiritualizing” is also contrary to the teaching of Scripture (I Cor. 2:13-15; also the many passages in which Scripture itself “spiritualizes” the things of the Old Testament, notably I Pet. 2:5-9 and the whole book of Hebrews). We hope, God willing, to deal in more detail with this matter of “literalism” in a future article, but would point out, that while Scripture must be interpreted carefully and soberly, there

are things which *cannot* be taken literally, e.g., the white stone of Revelation 2:17.

We will continue to point out these errors in the next issue. ❖

Rev. Hanko is pastor of Lynden Protestant Reformed Church in Lynden, Washington.

Church History

Mayflower Church

by J.P. deKlerk

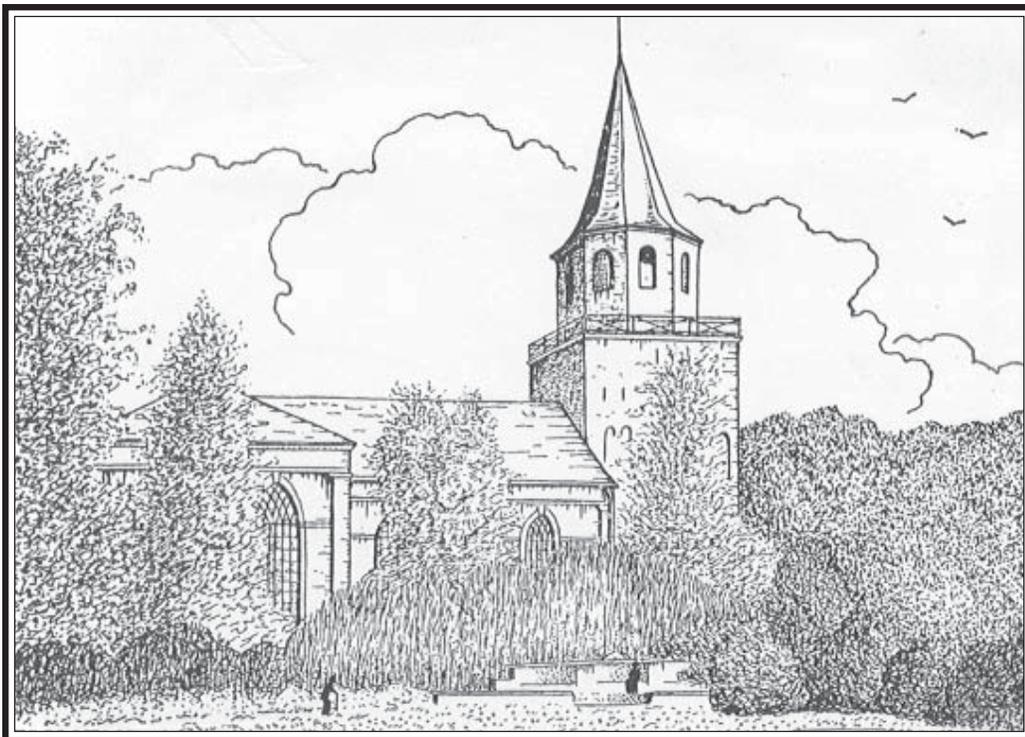
Many people do not even know that it exists, but in Amsterdam at the “Begijnhof” stands a British Reformed Church, built in 1607. It has the name “The Mayflower Church” or “The Pilgrim Church,” because in 1620 the “Pilgrim Fathers” (also called “the Puritans”) gathered here before they left for America. Their leader was Robert Browne, the ship, the well known Mayflower. (See the picture of the Mayflower Church on the front cover.)

The Village Church of Emmen

by J.P. deKlerk

Emmen is nowadays a city, but the old State Reformed Church is still called the Village Church, in the center. I know the place very well, because my grandparents lived there and each year, I spent my summer holidays there; occasionally Easter and Christmas also. If my grandfather was in good health, we walked every Sunday to the Synodical Reformed Church and passed by this old building. I made the drawing in 1940. At the side there was a bench where elderly people could have a rest and a chat. The church had a very high ceiling inside; I had a look around once when a cousin

was baptised there. Emmen is situated in the southeastern part of the province of Drente. Centuries ago, when The Netherlands as a country did not yet exist, the sea came all the way to Emmen, which laid high above surrounding swampland, with graves made of huge stones (called hunebedden) made by people nobody has ever seen. The small settlement was first called Embini and is mentioned in a document dated 1137.❖



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

The Package

"LITTLE LIGHTS"

... let it shine!

by Connie Meyer

It was in the black of night that a cloaked figure approached the castle wall. An owl hooted. A cricket chirped. But that was all that could be heard. A satchel was opened and a package was withdrawn. The figure held it and peered up into the darkness, up to the top of the wall...

The chill of late autumn enveloped the watchman at the castle gate. A bird. A cricket. It was a very quiet night. He yawned. He never heard the package land inside the walls that he was guarding. He never heard the retreat from the grounds he was supposed to watch...

"We believe that our salvation consists in the remission of our sins for Jesus Christ's sake..."

"We believe that we have no access unto God, but alone through the only Mediator and Advocate, Jesus Christ..."

Such were the precious words wrapped up within the package that was thrown over the castle wall. It was a confession of faith. The people of God were being persecuted. They were being killed for their faith. But did the rulers really know what these people believed? They believed in God. They even believed in submitting to rulers. Maybe this confession would help their persecutors understand...

The pink of dawn reflected off the castle towers while the guards changed their watch. But what was this? Something was on the ground, a package of some sort...

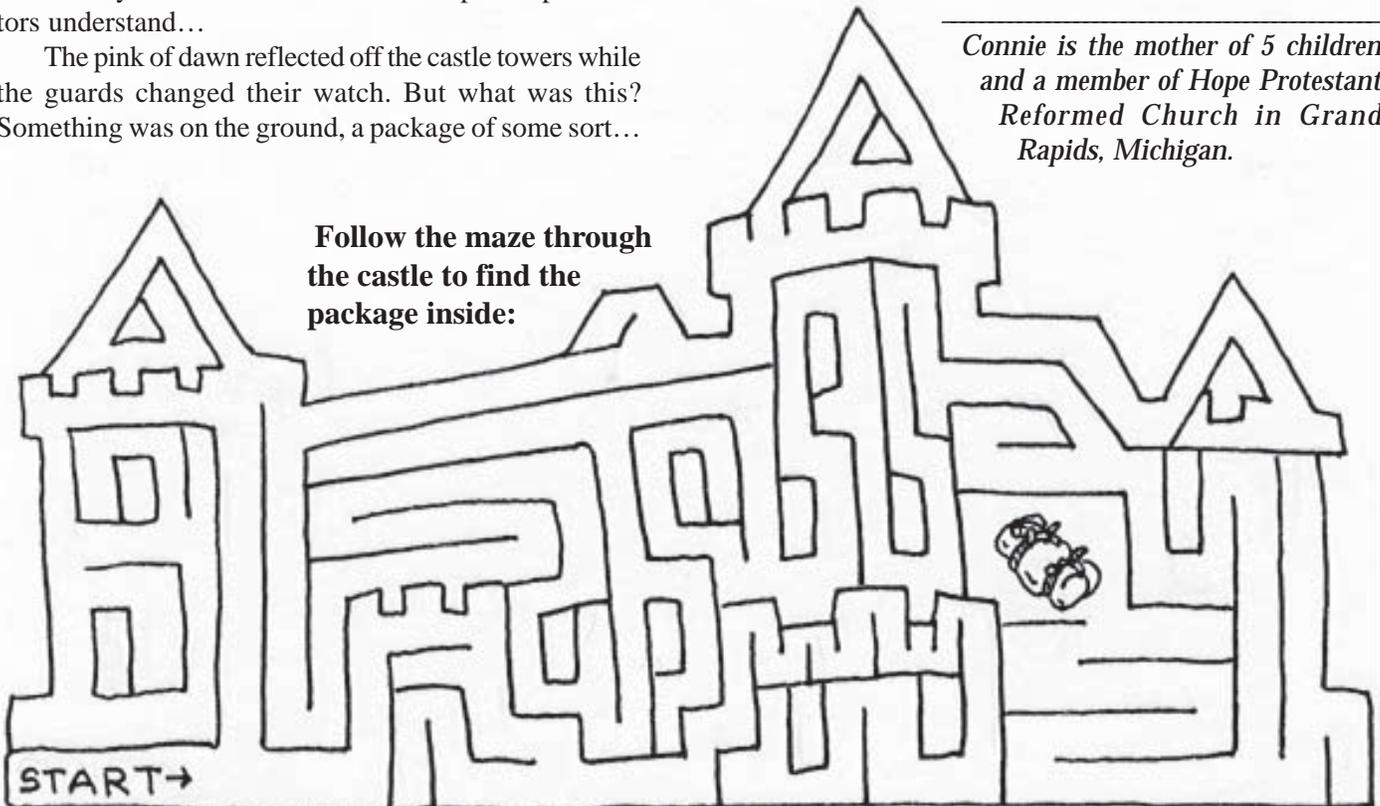
The rulers did not like this confession. They hated its God, the God Who saves by grace alone. Their own god saved with help from themselves. They hated the people of this sovereign God even more.

Such is the story of the night of November 1, 1561, the night the Belgic Confession was tossed over the wall of the castle in Doornik. Such is the story of God's people from righteous Abel to the tribulation of the saints at the end of time. But such is our comfort: God Himself put that enmity and hatred there. God divides—and God has the victory. Indeed, He is sovereign and in control.

"And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" (Gen. 3:15). ❖

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

Follow the maze through the castle to find the package inside:



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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:
Tabitha Anne, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Tim Talsma—
Faith, MI

Tyce Allen, son of Mr. & Mrs. Rick Elzinga—Faith, MI
Lucas Joe, son of Mr. & Mrs. Tomm Heyboer—Faith, MI
Torrey Amos, son of Mr. & Mrs. Veryl Heynen—Hull, IA
Claire Elizabeth, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Dave
VanEgdom—Hull, IA

Carson James, son of Mr. & Mrs. Bart Zandstra—Hull,
IA

Alexander August, son of Mr. & Mrs. David Hollema—
Loveland, CO

John David, son of Mr. & Mrs. Charles DeGroot—
Randolph, WI

Cody Steven, son of Mr. & Mrs. Ryan Zandstra—South
Holland, IL

Chloe Ranae, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Jeremy Ward—
South Holland, 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:

Joe Kleyn—Grace, MI
Gise VanBaren—South Holland, IL
Denise Lenting—South Holland, IL
Katie Regnerus—South Holland, IL

MARRIAGES

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

Matthew 19:5

United in the bond of Holy Matrimony were:

Mr. Kent Deemter and Miss Anne Decker—Faith, MI
Mr. Evan Brummel and Miss Kimberly Vogel—Hull, IA
Mr. Travis Groeneweg and Miss Jodi Reichert—Hull, IA
Mr. Aaron Regnerus and Miss Bobbi Witvoet—South
Holland, IL