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# Beacon

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# Lights

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This drawing of John Calvin was made two years before his death, by the Hungarian artist Lunsdorf Karoly. A painted copy exists in the Calvin Centre in Larnaca, Cyprus.



## BEACON LIGHTS

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## Deceit (2)

by Aaron J. Cleveland



In the last article on the topic of “deceit” we began with a broad definition of the practice of deceit. Next, we saw that all lies and deceit are the works of the devil and that we, according to our old man of sin, are under the power of deceit. Having been delivered from the spiritual dominion of Satan by the work of Christ, we now delight in the truth and we hate all lies and deceit in the new man. Therefore, according to the new man we must battle against the deceitfulness of sin within us. We understood, by means of an illustration, how one can fall into the sin of slandering a brother in Christ by failing to crucifying the sin of deceit within his thoughts.

Now we will move on and notice how we are to fight against lies and deceit. It is important for us to understand that deceit is not merely a power which operates outside of us. The devil would be ineffectual with his powers of deceit unless he had an ally in our sinful flesh. He knows what our old man of sin wants to hear. And because of that old man, all the temptations which the world places before us pose a very real spiritual threat. As long as we are on this earth, our battle will continue against our three-fold enemy, which would lead us away from the truth. But we, the children of God, are not powerless in this battle against lies and deceit. We have won the victory in Christ. Our three-fold enemy was mortally wounded at the cross. Christ, in his death and resurrection, has forever conquered the devil and his deceiving hosts so that they cannot prevail against the people of God and lead them completely astray. This does not mean that we do not have to fight against lies and deceit. Rather, it means that we fight in the assurance that we have certain victory. In God’s Word we are instructed as to how we are to fight against deceit. One passage in particular, II Thessalonians 2:9-13, summarizes nicely how the child of God is preserved in the truth even when many all around him succumb to the lie. There we read,

Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.

The “him” at the beginning of the passage refers to Antichrist who will be revealed near the end of time. He will deceive all those who believe not the truth, but have pleasure in unrighteousness. Evidence of our sure preservation in the truth is found near the end of this passage. God has chosen us “to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth” (vs. 13). We will not be deceived because part of God’s gift of salvation to us is that we *believe* the truth and *love* the truth. It is a *love* for the truth which we have. Much more is involved than a mere intellectual acknowledgment that God’s Word is truth.

One who *loves* the truth, *loves* God. One who *loves* the truth is united to Christ by faith. By faith, he “embraces Jesus Christ, with all His merits, appropriates Him, and seeks nothing more besides Him” (Belgic Confession, Art. 22). One who loves the truth lives a life of sanctification by the Spirit, walking

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in good works of thanksgiving to God. His sanctified life will be characterized by an ever growing love for God and appreciation of His truth. He will be faithful in his attendance of the preaching of the pure doctrine of the gospel. He will carefully read and study his Bible in order that he might more know His God and grow in love for his God. He confesses with the Psalmist, "Mine eyes prevent the night watches, that I might meditate in Thy word" (Psalm 119:148). Further, his love for the truth is made known by his contempt for lying and deceit. Like the Psalmist he confesses, "Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way" (Psalm 119:104). One who loves the truth will distinctly confess it, clearly distinguishing between the truth and all lies.

It is our *love* for the truth that is our surest defense against deceit. For when we love God and His Word we are careful to dig into His Word and search it out. We come to know and love God as He reveals Himself to us in His Word. His truth becomes very precious to us. Our knowledge of the doctrines of the Reformed faith increases and we grow in our understanding of how all these doctrines are comprehended in one system of truth. We read and study the creeds which the Spirit of Truth has led the church to develop in times of attack against the truth.

When, out of love, we embrace as truth God's Word and the Reformed creeds, we will not be deceived. This knowledge of love is an armor which protects us from the devil and all his deceits. When Satan would draw us away by the deceitfulness of the pleasures and riches of this world, we say to him, "I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness" (Psalm 84:10). When Satan would entice us with a life of self-fulfillment and indulgence, we say to him, "What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Matt. 16:26). When false teachers would lead us into the errors of believing that any part of our salvation is dependent upon our works, we take them to the Canons of Dordt. God's Word is our surest defense.

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Whenever we minimize the importance of knowing the truth  
... we will find that we more easily fall prey to deceit.

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Whenever we minimize the importance of knowing the truth and confessing it distinctly, or we sink into a spiritual sleep and give very little attention to spiritual activities, we will find that we more easily fall prey to deceit. Just as a young child believes nearly everything he is told, so will we be as spiritual children, "tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive" (Eph. 4:14). We will be as the "simple" man of Proverbs 14:15, who "believeth every word." It may be that God will allow us to be deceived and fall for a time into a particular sin. Or perhaps He will let us walk for a time in the sin of believing and confessing false doctrine. We will experience the painful consequences of these sins. Think of the father, for example, who takes his family out of a church where the truth is found and joins an apostatizing church where false doctrine is present. After a while, God calls him to repentance and brings him back to the true church, but his children do not come back with him. When our love for God and His truth dims, He may lead us through very dark and painful ways in order to restore us.

Understand, it is more than a mere intellectual mastery of the doctrines of God's Word that preserves us. There are many theologians who spend much time studying Scripture absent a love for God. They are mired in deceit because they do not have the "fear of the Lord" which is the "beginning of knowledge." (Prov 1: 7).

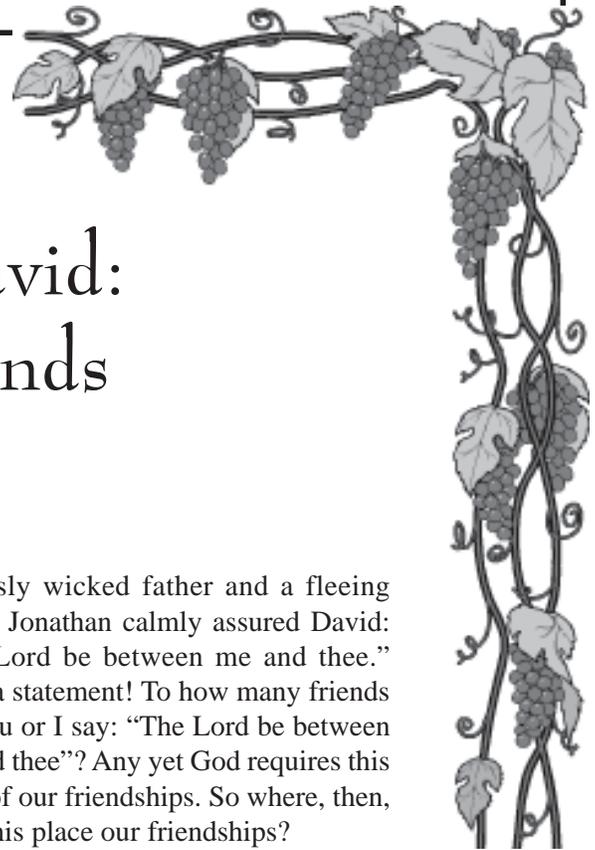
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We see the devastating consequences of fallen man's rejection of God and His truth in the world around us. God is revealing His wrath from heaven against all those "who hold the truth in unrighteousness" (Romans 1:18). He is giving them over to every possible sin as a just punishment for their rejection of the knowledge of Him.

In this day also, there are many false prophets and teachers who claim to teach the truth of God's Word, but in reality bring false doctrines and damnable heresies. They speak "good words" and their "fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple." But we fight in the victory which Christ has won for us. We are not fooled by their "good words" and "fair speeches." When we expose their teachings to the light of God's Word, we see them as they really are. When false prophets come to us in sheep's clothing, God by His Spirit gives us the spiritual discernment to judge them by their fruits and to expose them as ravaging wolves (Matt. 7:15,16).

May God grant that we "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." ❖

Fruitful Branches



## Jonathan and David: Covenantal Friends

by Aaron Lanting

"Is not the arrow beyond thee?" There it was, David's answer. It was the answer that would forever physically separate him from his closest friend, Jonathan. David and Jonathan were more than just close friends. Their friendship was a covenantal friendship—a friendship forged by (and with) the Lord. They were friends who spiritually sharpened each other as iron upon iron. Their goals, purposes and intentions had a common goal—serving God.

Here, at the time of their separation, they left as friends covenantally bonded forever in Christ. "Go in peace forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of the Lord, saying, The Lord be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed forever" (I Sam. 20:42). Here were two young, valiant men. One the son of a King; the other the adored victor over the Philistine champion. Yet caught in a battle between a

jealously wicked father and a fleeing friend, Jonathan calmly assured David: "The Lord be between me and thee." What a statement! To how many friends can you or I say: "The Lord be between me and thee"? Any yet God requires this in all of our friendships. So where, then, does this place our friendships?

There are two types of friendships: those in which we are unequally yoked with unbelievers, and those which include the Lord God of Israel. Why shouldn't we be unequally yoked with unbelievers? The answer to this question is revealed in God's Word (II Cor. 6:14-15). "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers..., for what part hath he that believeth with an infidel (unbeliever)." Christ commands us to be holy for He is holy. Yet our walk of life cannot be holy if

it is tarnished by a yoke with an unbeliever. Rather our yoke should be a purified, holy one, as was Jonathan and David's.

Take notice that David was in deep peril. He was the prey that Saul so vehemently hunts. Jonathan was the one with spiritual strength. He saw David's weak faith, his peril, and so offered himself to help and serve David, both with physical needs (in hiding him) and spiritual assurance. Jonathan's confidence was in God. He saw God's grace in David's life and offered his friendship as a true, godly friend, who had strength in areas where David did not.

This is a great example of the wonderful intimate bond of godly friendship. Notwithstanding their circumstances, faith in God, and fervent prayer enable these two to cross this bridge in their life. Our friendships should also be modeled in this manner. How important it is to have covenant friends in a time of spiritual need. David believed death was but a step away, yet was assured by Jonathan that his time on this earth was not yet fulfilled. God uses covenantal friends as a means of spiritual assurance, as well as spiritual growth.

Some might say that they have nothing in common with people from church, but we, as Christians, have much in common (i.e., the common goal of service to Christ). Who then do we pick as friends? Friends should primarily be those young people in the "church" (those who are believers of Reformed doctrine), as they are believers with whom we should have a great deal in common with. If there is no common ground, then we must be careful when we make friends with those who are outside of the church. Through prayer and sharing scripture our friendships in the church should be those of an unbreakable bond—the bond with Christ. These friendships will reflect our ultimate friendship with Christ, the one who carries all our burdens, and knows us, our strengths and our weaknesses. May that friendship be ever growing and never ceasing.

Parents of young people and young adults: Pray! and urge your children to stake covenantal friendships—friendships of everlasting praise to God in Heaven. To those who have close Christian friends: Consider yourself blessed to be able to say "The Lord be between me and thee." Wow! What a powerful testimony to declare in this day and age. May God bless us in our youth and friendship with each other. ❖

*Aaron is a member of Loveland Protestant Reformed Church in Loveland, Colorado.*

## Reproach

*Reproached for Jesus' sake?  
That's not what we desire;  
We'd rather be esteemed  
Because we thus aspire.  
Yet God says they are blest  
Who for their faith are scorned,  
Who gladly are despised,  
With harsh rebuke adorned.*

*If we desire men's praise  
We're seeking self, not God.  
If love for Him comes first  
We'll shout His praise abroad;  
And then, renouncing self,  
Our spirits are refreshed,  
Contentment we enjoy;  
In Him we find true rest.*

*Yet suffering reproach  
Is difficult to bear;  
To freely acquiesce  
Requires a life of prayer.  
Our evil natures haunt us,  
Our hearts' desires are base;  
But Christ, our intercessor  
Redeems us by His grace.*

Thelma Westra

# The Fourth Man

## A Story from the Time of the Afscheiding

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

### Chapter 22 To a New World

*The last chapter, which described the persecution to which the Secessionists were subjected, really ended the story. This chapter and the concluding one narrate events ten years later.*

It was on a windy spring morning in the year 1847, 11 years after the events described in the last chapter. Along the Moleneind the wagon of Ko Boelhouwer rattled slowly out of the town in the direction of the Gooise Canal. The farmer himself held the reins in his hands. His back was just as rigidly erect as before, but his face showed wrinkles that could never be erased. Next to him sat Gijsbert Haan. His figure had thinned out and his hair had turned gray.

The wagon, loaded with traveling chests and suitcases, passed the Boomberg. At its highest point, an age-old, reed-covered town windmill turned steadily. With a melancholy glance Gijsbert Haan stared at the turning of the vanes with the awareness that he was seeing the trusty windmill for the last time in his life. The driver knew what must be going on in the mind of his companion. He was silent and let the horse move on slowly.

More clearly than ever the events of the past years passed before Gijsbert's mind.

The first years after the secession had been extremely difficult. Many in the town would do no business whatever with those "doctrinally sensitive<sup>1</sup> and sanctimonious people." Because of this, some of the Secessionists were brought into extreme poverty. Gijsbert Haan had to exchange his nice farm on the Groest for a dwelling on the avenue in the midst of the "Devil's corner",<sup>2</sup> to the great

delight of his enemies. Of his fourteen children, five had died at an early age.

The Sunday meetings had been impossible. The congregation gathered at night or in the early morning hours at an outlying farm or in a quiet shop. They even assembled a few times in Gijsbert Haan's house. That was comparatively safe, since the inhabitants of the "Devil's corner" slept off their drunkenness during the night from Saturday to Sunday. Sometimes, as during the Eighty-years War,<sup>3</sup> an itinerant preacher was present to baptize a child or to serve communion. Like a thief he would slip into and out of the town. Naturally some of this became known in the town, which mocked at the "early mass" of the Secessionists.

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In 1839 the congregation had sent a request to the king to be organized as the "Christian Secession Congregation". That had been a bitter procedure, for it meant abandoning the right of being the continuation of the old fatherland church. Many of the secession churches took this desperate step. They were so weary of the persecution! But king William I had haughtily refused the request of Hilversum.

A year later he had suddenly stepped down and was succeeded by his son, King William II. The new king was much more lenient than his father. He immediately stopped the persecution of the Secessionists and dismissed the stern minister of justice, Van Maanen. A wave of sincere thankfulness swept through the churches of the Secession, even though they realized that the government had made their freedom not a matter of justice, but of favor.

But the suffering of the young churches continued in a different manner. Mutual disagreements arose that became heated arguments. Gijsbert Haan experienced this misery close at hand. In 1843 the North Holland

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churches delegated him to the general synod in Amsterdam. There he had to take a stand against his beloved minister Scholte, who wanted to go in the wrong direction and after one day he and a number of his followers had left the meeting of synod. Those who remained had continued to meet for another week. At the end they had kneeled down on the ground, confessed their guilt and adjourned without having made a single decision<sup>4</sup>. As a broken man Gijsbert Haan had returned to Hilversum. He felt worse about this than about all the persecutions!

In 1845, now two years ago, the Netherlands was plagued with a mysterious potato blight. This became a national calamity. Seventy percent of the harvest was lost, and the potato was the main staple in the diet of the lower class! The fields of Hilversum were also affected. The potato fields turned a gruesome black. The inhabitants became discouraged and restless by the threatening famine; soldiers came into the town to maintain order. Real hunger was suffered that winter, also in the families of the Secessionists. It seemed as if God had turned against them in every respect. The next year the strange blight recurred, although in a milder form.

That fall an incident happened that made a deep impression upon the Secessionists. Rev. Van Raalte from Arnheim, with a group of fellow believers, had gone to seek refuge in the United States. He established a colony in the wooded area of the state of Michigan, and called it Holland. From then on Gijsbert Haan was of the conviction that this was the only solution for him and for his family: to go to a new world!

At the beginning of the year word came that Rev. Scholte also wished to travel to America. He had his eye on the prairies of the state Iowa.

Gijsbert Haan called for a meeting of the congregation and proposed that they join themselves with the emigrants of Rev. Scholte.

These were very serious times. Not all the members of the congregation were able to take that big step. Especially the heirs of their forefathers, in spite of all injustice and misery, were too attached to their inheritance to forsake it. Others were strongly opposed to Rev. Scholte. Finally Gijsbert Haan had twenty names to hand over to the minister.

The emigrants had sold their lowly possessions and on the last night on the farm of Ko Boelhouwer had bid farewell to those who remained behind. It had been an emotional gathering, for had they not for many years experienced joy but especially sorrow together?

The words of Maarten's grandfather had made an especially tremendous impression upon them. "You folks are now going to a new world. Maybe you will find freedom there, but not perfection. You will find that only in the new world to which I hope soon to go. Then we will see each other again."

They had prayed with each other and for each other.

In the morning they intended to travel by tow-boat to Utrecht and from there to Rotterdam. There they would embark with about 800 other Secessionists gathered from the whole country. Four emigrant ships lay under sail for the crossing to Baltimore. Rev. Scholte had traveled ahead of them by steamboat to arrange their reception.

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The wagon slowly approached the place where the Moleneind ended at the beginning of the Goeise canal. There was a lot of activity, for efforts had been made for years to bring the canal to the center of the city. Both men did their utmost to act as if they did not even hear the shouting and whistling of the diggers.

Four years before, a wooden bridge had been laid over the new section of the canal. This was paid for with the receipts from the dog licenses, and was therefore called the "Dog Bridge."

A farmer approached the bridge with his milk-donkey, which laboriously moved along with a blue milk can on each side. The farmer, Roel Calis, who had his farm nearby, answered the greetings of the men shyly and reluctantly. Obviously he did not know how to act.

A moment later he hastily drew his donkey aside to allow a small coach to pass. It was Doctor Van Hengel, who was hurrying to a patient in the Corversbos. Amazed, the doctor stared through his small window at Gijsbert Haan and the baggage on the wagon. He was an excellent physician with a warm heart for his patients, but he could not understand this "foolishness" at all. Compassionately he shook his big head.

Mockery, embarrassment and compassion, that was all that Hilversum had to offer that morning.

Soon the wagon reached the old cattle ferry-station of the "Perk-Haanse Canal Boats". It bore the remarkable name "That's It".

The tow-boat to Utrecht was waiting. At the sturdy gangplank were gathered nervous groups of emigrants. Immediately the men approached the wagon and began to drag the baggage to the fore-castle of the boat. The young, popular policeman Jan de Jager, who had to keep an eye on the Secessionists, quickly looked over their baggage. Reassured, he strolled back to the town.

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When the last travel trunk was carried aboard, Gijsbert Haan thanked Ko Boelhouwer in the name of all of them for hauling their baggage. “No thanks,” the farmer shook it off. “It is the last that I can do for you.”

A thin, half grown boy hitched up the old tow-horse. It was Krijn Splint, formerly Koen’s weak, little brother, who now as driver of the towboat worked at the towing service.

The emigrants boarded the boat. First the large family of Gijsbert Haan, then the others, mostly young people. The last to cross the gangplank were Jan Roest, the young wagon maker, and Gerard Ham, the weavers’ boss, who had finally also joined himself with the Secessionists, to the indescribable scorn of his colleagues. The sailor hauled in the gangplank behind him with a careless motion. As soon as the bell had sounded Krijn started to spur on his nag.

The worn out animal took a firm stand and with a slight jolt the boat began to move. When it had reached sufficient speed Krijn jumped on his horse; in the style of hunters he sat with his legs on one side.

Most of the emigrants had gathered on the forecastle of the boat to cast a last glance at their town over the top of the hold and deck house. Some were at the point of

breaking down, especially Gerard Ham. “Farewell, Hilversum!” he said in a choking voice.

“They will miss us like a toothache,” thought Bart Van Leeuwen, a young cabinetmaker, who stood by the railing with his wife and child. But Jacob Hordijk, an old spinner, immediately admonished him.

“You may not talk that way, Bart! There are also people like the grocer Cornelis De Jongh. And above all, a church remains behind. The same God who accompanies us will also care for them. We remain united in the faith. That is the wonder of the church!”

Then the tow-boat slid under the Stone Bridge in the direction of the Vecht, heading for freedom. ❖

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<sup>1</sup> The Dutch term is really a term of derision. It is here applied to people who consider doctrine important and insist on Biblical accuracy in doctrinal statements. It was then as it is now, few care for precision in matters of the truth.

<sup>2</sup> The area in the town where all the taverns were located.

<sup>3</sup> The war between the Netherlands and Spain at the time the Reformation was just beginning. The persecution of the Reformed people during this time was terrible.

<sup>4</sup> There were many differences and disputes among the Secessionists during their early years.

# Should Publishing Be Your Calling?

by Natalie Jefferson

**O**n the back cover of the August/September 2002 *Beacon Lights*, Editor John Huizenga has a questionnaire in which he asks for suggestions to improve the magazine. He has often invited young people to contribute articles and join the staff as well.

This opens up a topic that is bigger than just the needs of *Beacon Lights*. Protestant Reformed literature will decline in coming years unless some young Protestant Reformed people are preparing themselves educationally and vocationally for callings related to publishing.

By “calling” I mean a line of work—be it in or out of the home—where you enjoy making use of the gifts God has given you to serve Him and to benefit others.

## Scripture Speaks

One general Scripture regarding our callings is Psalm 90:17: “And let the beauty of the LORD our God be upon us; and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it.”

Isaiah 52:7 uses the word *publisheth*, which has in it the idea of “proclaims,” “shows forth,” and “witnesses

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to”: “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!” This kind of publishing means all types of communication, such as sharing ideas with your neighbors, preparing the written word, teaching, and preaching. God sent His Son to earth, and the apostle John tell us this about the Son: “The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us” (John 1:14). Scripture thus indicates that He was sent to *communicate* with us. If He has done this, we, in turn, communicate His great salvation to others.

Unlike so many other publishers, those who publish Protestant Reformed materials have God’s truth to proclaim. It is important that this truth be written, edited, printed, and distributed. Publishing is already happening among us, as we see from our periodicals, pamphlets, newsletters, catechism materials, Sunday school lessons, books, and even church bulletins.

### Types of Workers

Written materials don’t just magically write and print themselves and arrive in your mailbox or in the narthex. Also, more than just writing is involved in publishing. Like publications anywhere, those produced by members of the PRC require the following sorts of workers:

- Writers, editors, and proofreaders for the editorial part of the job
- Designers who create artistic book and pamphlet covers and page designs, and who suggest layouts for promotional pieces, catalogs, and order blanks
- Typists who know enough about word processing to make corrections to electronic manuscript files and to perform other typesetting tasks
- Scanners or typists (if previously written material not in electronic format needs to be put on disk)
- Business and accounting minds who can project costs and earnings, follow a budget, report earnings, and deal with money received
- Promotional/advertising writers
- Computer whizzes who can design and update websites, network office machines, fix computers, and maximize computer efficiency
- Those who take orders that arrive by phone, e-mail, and regular mail, and who can learn to input these facts into a computer to generate invoices and mailing labels
- Packers and shipment people who can lift heavy loads, assemble orders accurately, and learn how to

run postage meters and follow postal regulations for bulk mailings and for packages being sent overseas

### Why Give Yourself to PR Publishing?

In 1924, when the Christian Reformed Church was afraid to let articles of the outspoken Rev. Herman Hoeksema be printed anymore in CRC magazines, Hoeksema and some men in his church formed the Reformed Free Publishing Association (RFPA) so that they could freely speak out in a magazine they called *The Standard Bearer*. The first issue was published October 1, 1924, and the *Standard Bearer* has been published ever since. This is why *Standard Bearer* volumes run from October through September rather than from January to December. The word “Free” in the title of the RFPA means free from denominational control, so that a classis or synod can never shut it down. It is the reason why in 1953 the words of Hoeksema and other ministers who agreed with him could not be hushed up. The opposition was allowed to write articles for the *Standard Bearer*, too, but the point was that those standing for the truth were not silenced, and church members could compare the two points of view. Magazines, pamphlets, and books have played a large part not only in the formation of the PRC, but also in her preservation. If we ignore publishing of Protestant Reformed literature and do nothing to help it today, its vital witness may disappear altogether. Then you may experience what happens when a denomination begins to lose its distinctive doctrines and heads down the road to apostasy.

Whether you make contributions to help our publications, subscribe to our periodicals, buy our books, or lend your expertise as a volunteer or salaried worker to publish them, your participation is definitely needed. Actually very few individuals are now involved in the production of written materials needed by those in the PRC, and the majority of them are middle-aged or older. They have heavy workloads. Who will replace them when they can no longer work so many hours, or are unable to work at all?

### Preparing Yourself

Not everyone is interested or gifted in the tasks described in this article, but a few young people who *are interested* and *are gifted* may want to consider training for this work.

The editorial jobs of writing, copyediting, and proofreading probably take the most education. A wide liberal arts background is helpful, with a major in English and courses in literature, writing, editing, and perhaps

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journalism. It would be smart to improve your library research skills and to work hard at the footnotes and bibliographies in your high school and college research papers according to the accepted stylebooks, because proper documentation can make a difference in the quality of our publications. You can gain experience in some of the skills mentioned by becoming part of the *Beacon Lights* staff even while you are still in school. It is assumed that writers and editors love to read and do a lot of it. Reading the Bible and worthwhile books helps you to unconsciously absorb the principles that go into the best writing so that you recognize it when you see it. Even without any special training, editorial types should be able to pick up some of the errors in what they read, because those with a talent for it have built-in “eyes” and “ears” for grammar, punctuation, spelling, agreement, word choice, and the like.

Still another kind of eye and brain belong to the budding designers, who can head to art school and study techniques of commercial and other types of art, of photography, and of software that manipulates lines, colors, and images the way that word processing manipulates words. If you have these interests, you can go to the large bookstores and see how books and magazines are being designed and illustrated these days. You can also work alongside an experienced designer as a sort of apprentice for awhile.

Typesetters are the people who take the words of a manuscript from disk and apply the designer’s specifications so that the final printout looks the way it will in the finished product. The *Standard Bearer* is typeset by a staff member. RFPA books are typeset by a commercial typesetter. Typesetters need good English and word processing skills as well as an ability to read designer specs and the handwriting of copyeditors who have made corrections to manuscript pages and galley proofs. It is not particularly creative work, but it requires an ability to follow directions and to learn computer typesetting techniques. Physical ability to sit for long hours indoors and to focus on a computer screen are also basic requirements for this job.

Business administration, math, and accounting courses in college would help “number people” who are interested in the financial and order fulfillment side of publishing. Without such people, a non-profit organization may not be ready for tax season, may not properly keep records of employee earnings, and may be fearful of taking risks or trying new ways of doing things, resulting in its getting bogged down with antiquated sys-

tems that slow production and keep an office from getting the printed word out to new customers.

### **Advantages of Volunteering**

For young people especially, volunteering in an area of your interest may be just the way to discover whether you would like it as a job. While you are still living at home is the perfect time to volunteer, especially if your parents are willing to give you six months or so to live rent-free, with food at their expense. Whether you are a paid employee or a volunteer, you can still put the experience and work dates on your resume and use your supervisor as a reference. Sometimes the simpler duties given to volunteers are the very springboard you need to move ahead. Volunteering allows you, even by observation, to absorb many things about the world of work. What if you can’t find a job immediately after high school or college? Wouldn’t a short-term volunteer job be valuable, even if a company does not have the time to train volunteers in the more advanced skills?

If volunteering leads you to become a paid member of a Protestant Reformed publications staff, it may mean working for less money and benefits than you could earn on a secular job. Would you be willing to make this sacrifice?

### **A Word to Those in Charge**

I have a question for those who now produce our publications. Are you willing to let young people volunteer to help you with something, if they ask, and to mentor them if they show special promise? Let me take this one step further. Are you willing to go *looking* for such young people, and then to let them learn some skills directly from you? Waiting until you die some day when others will have to figure out how you did your job may prove detrimental to the organization. Think how much information would die with you! Parents pass on vital information about life to their children. Shouldn’t those in charge of various publications now be training the younger members of our denomination to have a part in this great work?

“The Lord gave the word: great was the company of those that *published* it” (Ps. 67:11).

### **God Does It All**

Readers, be blessed by reading Exodus 31:1-11, 35:30-35, and 36:1-5. The LORD had given Moses instructions about the tent of meeting and its furniture, the fabric and form of the holy garments for the priests, and the mixtures for the anointing oil and incense. No doubt Moses wondered how all this was to be accomplished.

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But God not only gave the commands that these things be made; he also formed the hearts, minds, and bodies of some people with the very abilities needed to do the work. Read about Bezaleel and Aholiab and take courage. So will the LORD equip his servants, even now in the twenty-first century, for the tasks to which He has assigned them. ❖

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*Natalie is a member of Southwest Protestant Reformed Church and an editorial staff member of the Reformed Free Publishing Association.*

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## Creation Through the Spectacles of Scripture

# A Look at Patch of Forest Through the Spectacles of Scripture

by John Huizenga

**L**ightning smashed through the air, the rain poured from the sky, and thunder reverberated incessantly. As if mustering all its strength, the storm let loose a gust of wind that roared through the trees making them groan and creak, snapped branches and whipped leaves through the air. One old pine could no longer bear the weight of the wind pressing upon its mighty limbs and towering bulk. With a hollow thud the roots pulled from the soil, the massive trunk tilted, and the tree was hurled to the ground.

For the first time in one hundred and fifty years, bright sunlight flooded the forest floor. Warm fog hovered over the bare soil and drifted over the tangled pile of broken branches and smaller trees. Seeds that had been scattered by birds and wind, and had lain dormant for many years now received the proper conditions for germination. Blackberry seeds, wild grape seeds, elderberry seeds, and some pine seeds began to swell and send down their first root. Meanwhile, a fox found the upturned trunk to be an ideal spot for a den, and wood-boring insects began to gnaw beneath the bark of the fallen tree.

A few years later, the space where the tree once stood had become a wild tangle of vines, thorny berry bushes and sprawling elderberry bushes. A variety of plants found just the right conditions of light, soil, moisture, and protection from wind that they needed to flourish. Very quickly, the open wound in the forest was green with leaves. The vines had climbed the nearby trees to

capture the sunlight falling upon their bare trunks and branches. The bushes battled for space pushing weaker plants aside and reaching up for every possible ray of light. The fox and small birds enjoyed the protection afforded by the thorny jungle.

The pine seedlings that had sprouted did not compete well with their fast growing neighbors. The tender seedlings were protected by the surrounding vegetation, but would eventually die without some sunlight. A bear rummaging through looking for berries provided just the right conditions for a few of the small trees. The bear trampled some of the black berry bushes, and snapped a sprawling elderberry bush as it gobbled up the berries. The trees now had some light and some time to grow up beyond the reach of the bushes.

The seasons came and went. The old tree was gradually covered with vines, and the wood was reduced to the soil from whence it came by a multitude of insects, bacteria, and plants. The new trees absorbed the sunlight which poured each summer through the hole in the forest canopy, converted water, minerals from the soil, and carbon dioxide from the air into food for the living cells which multiplied, pushed the leading branch another few feet higher, and spread a new layer of wood around the trunk and branches. The tide for survival now favored the new pine trees that began to overshadow the bushes which were not able to grow any taller.

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One dry summer, a fire burned the litter along the forest floor and consumed the weak and light starving bushes beneath the young trees. Some of the smaller young trees could not endure the heat and died while the others continued to grow. Year by year they reached upward toward the tops of their neighbors and once again deep shade cloaked the forest floor. The bushes and vines had completely vanished. The trunks surpassed one hundred rings, and another storm ripped opened the forest once again.

Through the eyes of man's wisdom, we see here simply the complex interaction of plant and animal life cycles. Having forsaken God, man imagines that these plants have evolved over millions of years to take advantage of the infinite variety of conditions presented to them. Of all the primitive vine like plants, for example, those that grew the fastest with strong stems and clinging parts survived when all the others crowded the ground. New and lost genetic material in the plant enabled it to evolve into vines that could take advantage of a situation such as a tree falling down in a forest. Give millions of years of time and an infinite variety of growing conditions to the billions of genetic combination possibilities and you will end up with plants that fill every niche and circumstance on this earth, they say.

Through the spectacles of Scripture, this patch of forest looks entirely different. We see a storm under the providential care and command of God, not a storm that obeys simply the forces found in the atmosphere. "For he commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof" (Psalm 107:25). In that storm we also see a pattern of the way God works in time and history: the mercy of God against the dark background of God's wrath against sin, for in the way of darkness and destruction comes new life and provision for the beasts of the field. Even so in the way of God's wrath revealed in Christ, we have new life.

We see a plan to fill the earth with every green thing in perfect harmony with every other creature for the service of man, the church, and the glory of God, not a mad evolutionary dash for survival and preservation of species that had collected the chance combination of genes that happened to fit this habitat. "And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so" (Genesis 1:11). "He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man: that he may bring forth food out of the earth" (Psalm 104:14). The ungodly scientist may only

see the interaction of living things as an amazing mechanism, an incredibly complex chemical reaction that works together in amazing ways, while the believer sees the infinite wisdom of God.

The God who knows the number of the hairs upon our head also knows the number and location of every seed on the forest floor. "And say, Thus saith the Lord God; A great eagle with great wings, longwinged, full of feathers, which had divers colours, came unto Lebanon, and took the highest branch of the cedar: He took also of the seed of the land, and planted it in a fruitful field; he placed it by great waters, and set it as a willow tree" (Ezekiel 17:3, 5). In His wisdom, He provided a multitude of seeds not merely to ensure that a random scattering would provide some seeds for any fallen tree that blind chance would send, but the multitude of seeds comes from a bountiful supply of food for His creatures.

Everywhere we look through the spectacles of Scripture we see design, plan, and purpose. The animals find what they need, and at the same time God has so designed the thorns and vines (which appear to the evolutionist as competitors) to be protection for the pine seedlings and a means of thinning the trees for a proper spacing. We could study this one patch of forest for the rest of our life, count the thousands of different plant and animal species found there, study how they interact, and still barely scratch the surface of comprehending it all. Not all the brain and computer power in the world could plan this meal for the bear using all the thousands of creatures involved.

Man, having forsaken God, applies his own wisdom and can only see a chaotic mad struggle for millions of creatures to survive and perpetuate its life to the next generation. The "desire" to survive is merely a genetic fluke which has become a part of the genetic code that enables life to continue. There is no real goal or purpose that man can see in this world and universe apart from God. Man makes himself a god and tries to bend and force the chaos of life into his service and glory. When, by the grace of God, we sinful creatures pick up the spectacles of Scripture and look at creation, we see God. We see a wonderful harmony of created beings. We see design and purpose. The glory of God in Christ is the purpose and goal of this creation. ❖

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# Premillennialism

by Rev. Ron Hanko

**P**remillennialism (chiliasm) is the teaching that the personal, visible return of Christ will take place 1000 years before the end of the world. It teaches that apostasy and wickedness will increase and result in the final revelation of Antichrist. At that time a period of severe persecution (the great tribulation of Matt. 24:21) for the church will begin. This reign of Antichrist and period of persecution, which ends with the coming of Christ who will raise His saints, translate those who are still living, judge them, remove the curse from the earth, and establish an earthly kingdom in Jerusalem, which will last 1000 years.

That kingdom will be the result of a mass conversion of the Jews who will be restored to their own land. They, along with the Gentile Christians, will make up the kingdom of Christ, though the Jews will have the priority. That kingdom will be characterized by righteousness, peace and prosperity here on earth and will last exactly 1000 years. At the end of this period of Christ's earthly rule, the rest of the dead will be raised and the last judgment and the creation of the new heavens and earth will follow.

Some of these views of premillennialism are very strange. For one thing, the citizens of the millennial kingdom will be a mixture of those who have been raised and glorified and those who have not, who will still be their earthly bodies (cf. I Cor. 15:50). For another thing, they believe that this kingdom will be on an earth from which the curse has been removed, but which is not yet delivered completely from sin, death and sickness. On that earth the resurrected saints will live along with those who are still subject to sin and death.

There are, however, more important objections to this teaching:

(1) Scripture contradicts the teaching that the coming of Christ precedes the end of the world by 1000 years. Rather Scripture teaches that Christ's coming is simultaneous with the end of this present world (I Cor. 15:23-24); with the creation of the new heavens and earth (II Pet. 3:4-13); with the resurrection of *all* the dead (Rev. 20:12-15); and the last judgment (Jude 6-7, 14-15; Matt. 24:37-41; Lk. 17:28-37 – cf. also some of our earlier editions).

(2) Scripture does not teach more than one resurrection and judgment (Jn. 5:25-29) nor a resurrection and judgment that precede the end of the world by 1000 years (Jn. 6:39, 40, 44, 45; 11:24; I Cor. 15:51-52 – note the emphasis on “last” – cf. also earlier editions).

(3) Scripture teaches the very opposite of an earthly kingdom, i.e., that the kingdom is heavenly (Jn 18:36; Heb. 12:22-29, esp. vss. 22, 23, 28).

(4) Also, Scripture teaches that Christ's kingdom is everlasting, not just 1000 years (Dan. 4:4, 34; 7:27; II Pet. 1:11 – cf. also earlier editions).

(5) Nor does Scripture teach that “Jew” only ever refers to the physical descendants of Abraham. Indeed, it makes clear that all believers, Jews and Gentiles alike, are Jews or Israel in God's sight (Rom. 2:28-29; Gal. 3:29; Phil. 3:3 – cf. also earlier editions of this paper). Israel is the church (Acts 7:38) and the church is Israel (Heb. 12:22-23).

For these reasons especially we reject premillennial teaching. ❖

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# Watching Daily At My Gates

by Chester Hunter  
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## **October 1 Read James 3:1-12**

The book of James is full of practical instruction. The Holy Spirit through James has given us much on how to direct our lives. In this passage we find instruction needed by all. God has given to all of us the gift of language. Satan loves to take this gift and twist it to his benefit. We must take the admonitions found here and apply them to our lives. Our tongues can do great things; our tongues can cause the most dastardly evils. We must pray that our tongues only speak that which is in harmony with God's will. Sing or read Psalter 105.

## **October 2 Read Isaiah 51:9-16**

God is great. It is He that hath created the world. He has caused all manner of miracles to come to pass for His people. What is our response? We find it in verse eleven. God's people will approach Him with singing. We will come unto Him singing the songs He has given us. Our great God deserves nothing else. Let us enter into His courts with praise. Sing or read Psalter 39.

## **October 3 Read John 1:1-14**

Jesus has been from the beginning. He came into Israel and Israel rejected Him. This is the testimony of John 1. Do you believe this, people of God? Do you believe that Jesus was at creation? Do you believe that He is the Light of the world? If you do, then you must receive Him. How is this possible? Only by faith. Only by that faith which is the bond that unites us to Christ. What a wonder that we have been chosen out of all the people of the world! Let us bow before the Word made flesh and behold His glory. Sing or read Psalter 4, especially stanzas 3 and 5.

## **October 4 Read Daniel 4:20-37**

The sin of pride brings down more people, churches, and other institutions than any other. We quite often get off on the right foot, and then we fall into Nebuchadnezzar's sin. We begin to think that this church or school or whatever is the work of our hands. We must stop and remember and bless Jehovah who made heaven and earth. Churches and schools are necessary but we

must never erect them for our own pride. God humbled the great Nebuchadnezzar; He will humble us if we need it. Sing or read Psalter 304, especially stanzas 1-3 and 6.

## **October 5 Read Ephesians 3:14-21**

Paul gives us the positive outlook on the characteristic of humility. In this chapter Paul recounts that by the grace of God he became a minister so that he could preach to the Ephesians. But he takes none of the glory for himself. In this chapter and in many others Paul is always careful to give the glory to the most high God. We, too, must make that our goal. As members of His church, we must remember that it is His church. The world today thinks little of someone who does not take all the glory he can receive, but we are not of the world. We are of Christ. Sing or read Psalter 306.

## **October 6 Read Ecclesiastes 3:1-14**

Solomon saw that God had set up an orderly creation including time. God gave to us certain times to do certain things. Today is the Sabbath. In Genesis 1, God gave us the Sabbath as a day of rest from our earthly work. In the fourth commandment he give guidelines on how to glorify Him on the Sabbath. Are we using the Sabbath as a day to remember and keep holy? Are we giving God His due on His day? The world wants nothing to do with God's Sabbath. We are not of the world, but are a chosen people, elect according to the good pleasure of God. Let's put aside all things that belong to man and take up the things of God. Sing or read Psalter 349.

## **October 7 Read Galatians 6:1-10**

Reread verse seven. Do you, young people and older people, think you can hide your works from God? Do we think that our justifications (excuses) fool our heavenly Father? We hide nothing from God. We must always realize that fact in our lives. We are called to glorify God alone and no one else. If we do that, we will have nothing to hide from our heavenly Father. Sing or read Psalter 302.

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**October 8 Read Esther 4**

Wicked Haman and Ahasuerus had just given the order that Jews could be killed throughout all of the kingdom. When Esther hears the words, she is directed by Mordecai to go to the king and plead for deliverance. Esther agrees with her uncle and goes to the king. But Esther does not go with the confidence of God's sure promises. She goes with the attitude: What have I got to lose? We have seen that Esther and Mordecai have never used the ways of Jehovah before and they don't this time either. This may never be our way. Hard times are coming to the child of God. We must face them with the confidence that all things work for good to them that love God. Sing or read Psalter 106, especially stanzas 1, 2, 5 and 6.

**October 9 Read Hebrews 4:9-16**

Verse 16 provides a contrast to the attitude found in yesterday's passage. Here we find that the child of God, because of Christ, need not fear to ask his heavenly Father for help in time of need. Because of Christ we can come boldly to God's throne in prayer. Christ suffered all the same experiences we do including the temptation to sin. He knows our frailties and cares, and when we go to the Father through Him He will be our advocate. If a hard situation confronts us, we need not fear. We can lay our burdens on Jesus our brother. We can do this in the confidence that our Father will hear and answer us. Sing or read Psalter 278.

**October 10 Read Exodus 3:13-17**

One of our most precious possessions is that of the covenant—that promise that God will be our God and we will be His people. As a pledge to that covenant, He has given us His name I AM. We can rest assured that if I AM speaks it will surely come to pass. Moses felt he needed strong proof to show that God sent Him. God gave the strongest proof there is—His name. For us, too, the name which signifies the covenant is the proof of our salvation. Let us give thanks unto God for this gift! Sing or read Psalter 423, especially stanzas 6 and 7.

**October 11 Read I Corinthians 10:19-26**

The Christians in Corinth lived in a most wicked city. They were tempted on every side and in every place by the devil. Paul had to remind them that they could not do the things of Satan and the things of God. We, too, live in a most wicked place. Satan tempts us constantly. It is Friday night. Satan loves to see covenant young people go away on Friday night. By getting them into his playgrounds, he can tempt them to drink his cup. People of God, stay away from the devil's playground. Walk the walk of faith tonight for "the earth is the Lord's and the

fullness thereof." Sing or read Psalter 23, especially stanzas 1, 3, 5 and 6.

**October 12 Read Ezekiel 5:5-13**

When we read these words of doom which God pronounces upon His church that has gone astray, often we have two thoughts. We either are inclined to think that these words are for the old dispensation and have no meaning for us, or we feel there is no hope for us. Both of these thoughts are wrong. When we read about the Old Testament church, we must realize that we are one with them and every word written for them is written for us. When we feel a lack of hope, we must remember that Christ has delivered us from all of our sins. We have the hope of the last part of this book which is heaven. Sing or read Psalter 216, especially stanzas 1 and 3.

**October 13 Read I John 2:5-11**

Young people do you love your brothers and sisters in the Lord? I don't mean some of them. I mean all of them. Do you seek them out so that they know that you love them? Can they tell your love for them just by the way you see them in passing? If you don't love them, you hate them. If you hate them, you hate God! There is no other way to understand the words of our passage today. Part of the effect of God's covenant is that there is friendship not only between God and His people but also between every one of His people. Sing or read Psalter 113, especially stanzas 1-4.

**October 14 Read Ezra 5:1-5**

Israel had returned from captivity. The building of the temple was going slowly. After being scolded by Haggai and Zechariah, the leaders began the work again. Once again Satan tried to stop them by using several evil men. But, as we read in verse five, God's eye was on the elders and they persisted with their work. We must remember this even as we do the work of the kingdom. Whether it be mission work, building a church or school, or whatever God calls us to do, His eye is upon us. We have no need to falter in doing the work of the kingdom with the eye of God upon us. Sing or read Psalter 421, especially stanzas 2 and 3.

**October 15 Read I Peter 2: 13-24**

Once in a while we need to be reminded about our duty toward those in authority over us. I speak of the earthly rulers under whom God has placed us. Sometimes we get caught up in the world's way of making fun of them, and we forget that they are the servants of God. They can and will make laws which are in disobedience to God's law. Yet this passage instructs us to submit and to honor the authority. We must obey God's law even though it may bring earthly punishment. The passage gives us Christ as

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an example. This is a powerful example because through His obedience to God comes our salvation. Sing or Read Psalter 392, especially stanzas 1, 4 and 6.

**October 16 Read Genesis 22:1-14**

Abraham's thoughts were on how he could do such a thing to his beloved son. Then he was startled out of his thoughts by Isaac asking, "Where is the lamb?" Abraham answered with the beautiful answer of faith, "God will provide himself a lamb." Do we take this answer on our lips enough? As we seek for a mate, job, house, or whatever, do we have faith to say that God will provide for us? As young people you have many questions about the future. Leave the future in the hands of God and say with Abraham, "God will provide." Sing or read Psalter 396, especially stanzas 1-4.

**October 17 Read I Thessalonians 4:1-12**

In this chapter Paul gives the church many exhortations about a right Christian walk. The first section is in the negative as he tells how to please God by abstaining from various sins. Then in verses eleven and twelve he tells us what we must be doing. First he commands study, which can only be the study of the word of God. Then he tells us to work with our hands. One of the fruits of such study and work is the care of the poor. God places the poor among us for our care. Are we caring for them diligently? Look around you, young people, is there someone in your church or school you can help? Sing or read Psalter 48, especially stanzas 1, 3 and 8.

**October 18 Read Habakkuk 1**

In this first chapter the prophet is depressed over the state of the church. He feels that God has forgotten them, and that the wicked can do what they want, but yet he speaks some words of hope. First of all he shows that God is all powerful. It is God who will bring the Chaldeans to afflict Israel. Then in verse twelve he speaks of the everlastingness of God. He knows that God will not cause the church to perish. We must not look at hopeless situations with despair. We must trust in our Lord and He will deliver us even from the depths of our sin. Sing or read Psalter 22.

**October 19 Read I Timothy 4:12-16**

Young people, you have a calling to witness unto others the things of God. Paul wrote unto this young minister not to be afraid because he was young. You, too, must live pure lives with that truth ringing in your ears. Each of you has a specific gift of the spirit. Use that gift vigorously and to God's honor and glory. Don't be afraid to speak out about the faith that you have. There is a great reward in doing this. We see from verse 16 that salvation

is involved—both yours and that of those around you. Sing or read Psalter 132, especially stanzas 1, 2, 4 and 5.

**October 20 Read Haggai 2:14-19**

Israel had failed in building the temple. They had failed because they thought their own comfort and pleasure was more important. Evidently there had been a famine and drought in the land. Israel failed to see God's hand of judgment in the famine. This summer has been one of floods, storms, and drought. Have we recognized the hand of God? Did we see not only signs of the times, but also God's hand of judgment on His people for not carrying out the work of the kingdom? Sing or read Psalter 144.

**October 21 Read II Corinthians 4:13-18**

Are you weary of the troubles of the world? Has God brought upon you some great calamity? Do you feel that you are without hope? Read verse seventeen again. These afflictions are light! Light, you say? How can they be light when I don't know where to turn. They are light precisely because you do have somewhere to turn. We have Christ, and through Him our heavenly Father. Don't concentrate so much on things of this life. Look above and see the glory that awaits us. Our afflictions are light compared with the weight of glory that is ours in heaven. Sing or read Psalter 31, especially stanzas 1, 4 and 7.

**October 22 Read Hosea 14**

Hosea was called to preach during wicked times in Israel and Judah. Reading through this short book will show you the wickedness of the day, but God sent him to bring the Word to the elect. He preached to them repentance and the necessity of repentance. In this last chapter he shows the blessings of repentance. The elect sinner who repents will confess that the ways of the Lord are right and must be followed. In contrast the reprobate will fall from those ways. In the way of repentance, we will taste the goodness of Jehovah. Sing or read Psalter 144.

**October 23 Read II John**

The first part of this short epistle admonishes us to walk in love. The second part warns us that if we do not walk in love we will be in danger of falling into false doctrines. Many times we hear people speak of love, but then say that true doctrine is not important. This short book contradicts that evil position. As children of God we must know the doctrines that He has set forth in His word; then we must shun those who do not follow such doctrines. In this way we can be assured of the Father's love and be able to walk in love ourselves. Sing or read Psalter 328.

**October 24 Read I Chronicles 14:8-17**

Do you wish that God would tell you what steps to take next in your life? Do you think David had it easy because

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God told him which way to turn, and then David's fame grew? We have more than David. First of all we have Christ; David only ever had pictures. Secondly, we have the whole Word of God. True, the Bible will not tell you exactly what to do, but by knowing the Scriptures you can seek out God's will for you. After searching the Bible and praying, Christ will send His Spirit and help you with your cares of this life. Search the Scriptures and you will be rewarded. Sing or read Psalter 339.

**October 25 Read II Peter 3:13-18**

The first part of this chapter warns us to be watching for the return of Christ. In the second part it gives some guidelines on how to watch. In verse sixteen Peter warns against those that take Scripture and interpret it for their own end. Haven't we seen much of that in the world today? In the next two verses Peter tells us to watch out and not fall into this error, but rather grow in grace. Growth in grace can only come about when the Bible is used correctly, for that is all the Holy Spirit will bless with grace. Study the Scriptures, young people, and do not be deceived by those who twist it. Sing or read Psalter 338.

**October 26 Read I Kings 3:5-14**

God came to Solomon in a dream and give him a choice of anything he wanted. What would you pick? Would it be some material thing? Would it be a good education? Would you ask for a wife or husband? Solomon's choice was wisdom: the type of wisdom which he speaks of throughout the book of Proverbs. The wisdom he wanted had to do with the fear of Jehovah. God was pleased with Solomon's choice. He blessed him with many earthly blessings. What about us? Do we care enough about the fear of Jehovah to seek it as eagerly as we do some material thing? Sing or read Psalter 428, especially stanzas 2 and 3.

**October 27 Read II Thessalonians 3:6-18**

What do you do with your spare time? What do you do when you are not legitimately occupied with school, work, or other things of the kingdom. This passage portrays two possible behaviors. First of all there is a disorderly walk which some follow; then there is the much desired being busy in well doing. Paul exhorts us to not be weary in well doing. We can always find something to do which can be characterized under this term. This can be recreation as well. There is recreation which is blessed by God. So, people of God, use your time well and be not weary in well doing. Sing or read Psalter 301.

**October 28 Read II Kings 6:8-17**

Do you feel, young people, that around you are nothing but evil people trying to make you do wrong? Do you

feel that if you try to profess your faith among these wicked, that you will be persecuted? The prophet Elisha must have felt that quite often. First he had to work in Israel, which had gone astray. Then he had to face the wicked, like the king of Syria. Elisha's faith was such that he could say, "They that be with us are more than they that be with them." Elisha realized that the hosts of God were on his side. By faith we can have the same confidence, and we can go out into the world and profess our faith. Pray for the confidence of faith. Sing or read Psalter 306.

**October 29 Read II Timothy 2:1-14**

Paul gives the young preacher Timothy good advice on how to go about his work. This advice is applicable to us today as well, if we are to live lives acceptable to God. In verse four Paul tells Timothy not to become entangled with the affairs of this life. We can apply this to our lives as well. The world has taken days and made holidays out of them. They have done that to church holy days and others. One of the most blasphemous is coming up. Are you going to partake in evil Halloween? We must flee such days. It is not just a night of innocent fun. Stand fast, people of God, and please God who has chosen you to fight. Sing or read Psalter 217.

**October 30 Read II Chronicles 19:4-11**

When Jehoshaphat became king in Judah, he brought about a revival in the land. One of the acts he did was to establish rulers of various types throughout the land. As he established them, he reminded them that God had placed them in authority and that they had to answer to God. We need to look at this passage in two ways. First, we need to see that because God establishes authority we are bound to obey it. Second, when we are put in a place of authority we must act according to the commandments of God. We all fall into one or both of these categories, let us ask God for help in carrying out our station in life. Sing or read Psalter 223.

**October 31 Read Galatians 3:1-11**

After the first few hundred years of the new dispensation an important truth was lost to the church as a whole. It was not until 1521 that the Holy Spirit led Martin Luther to rediscover the truth, "The just shall live by faith." This led to the great Reformation which we celebrate today. Is that our life? Do we live by faith? Is the faith of our fathers evident in our lives? Take this day and every day to ponder this truth. But don't stop there! Live in that faith today and every day. Sing or read Psalter 364.

# The Reformed Heritage of Congregational Singing

by Melissa Van Baren

**H**ave you ever been in an argument where you were debating choir versus congregational singing? Did you know what to say? Do you know where that whole idea of choir singing stems from and that our fathers fought against this practice? Congregational singing is one of the many issues that the men of the reformation stood for. Singing was very important to our church fathers. It was important to Calvin, Luther, and all the rest. They recognized the dangers of having a choir sing in the place of congregational singing.

There was much corruption in the church at the time of the Reformation. The church was as apostate as it could get and there was only a handful of believers and those who stood for and fought for the truth. Even fewer were willing to die for the truth. Multitudes of people went to church for nothing more than a show. They listened to the wonderful sounds of the choir and the eloquent words of the preacher. Worship had become more and more passive.

What a sad thing. We should be thankful that we have congregational singing. We as a body with Christ as our head are able to proclaim His praise together. We are able to cry out together in misery of sin and ask for deliverance. As a body! It is an interesting thought indeed. This is what our church fathers fought for. They recognized the detriment of having a choir. They saw how the church got lazy when the choir took singing away from the people. They recognized how the body of Christ needed to praise God together. As a whole!

Congregational singing is important because in this way we can praise and magnify the Lord together as a whole. What could be more joyful for Him to hear than the hearts of His people singing out to Him? God does not care how good the most wonderful choir may sound. God only cares about that which is sung for total and complete praise from the hearts of believers.

We, still having the old man of sin in us, still lean towards passive worship. The choirs and the special numbers are nice and they have their place but not in the congregation of Christ.

Our church fathers fought against choir singing. They didn't want this because the body of Christ was to worship as a body and they also realized that the church people had a tendency to grow lazy and feel inadequate to sing when the choir had complete control of the "floor." May we never get to this point. Pray that our churches hold to the truth and that He always leads us to the light. So that even when all the churches surrounding us are having choirs, we don't give in to that pressure, that we as a whole body of Christ may sing together, which is what our fathers fought for.

"So We, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another" (Rom. 12:5). This verse speaks it all...how the whole church as one body is able to lift up his voice in harmony to God...for unity in the members. ❖

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

# Young People's Society

## Discussion Topics

**A**gain this year we include a list of the books of the Bible & topics that our Young People's Societies studied last year. Below is a list of those churches that responded to our request for information. We apologize if your society responded and we inadvertently left you out.

This society season let us take the time to dig into God's word for those treasures that only His children have been given eyes to see.

**Bethel** meets every Sunday throughout the year with about 16-20 members. They are studying the Gospel of John.

**Doon** has been studying the book of Acts for their main discussion period, which is approximately 40 minutes. Currently, they are in chapter 22 of the book of Acts. They have been using Prof. H.C. Hoeksema's outlines for Acts and find them very helpful to generate discussion. For after-recess they have been discussing the history of our churches through the book, *A Watered Garden*. They discuss one chapter for each meeting. They meet every Sunday evening from September through the end of April, except for the Sundays of the October, December, and March YP singspirations and the holiday breaks.

**Edgerton** studied the book of Daniel. Their society meets every Sunday during the same months as the school year.

**First of Holland** studied the Book of Revelation. They meet from late September through early April after the morning service. They also meet on the first Sunday night of the month to discuss a special topic.

**Georgetown** meets every Sunday after church starting in October and ending in April. The society consists of 9th graders through 12th graders. This past season they studied "The End Times" series by Rev. Barry Gritters. Some of the topics studied were: the great persecution, antichrist, world calamities, signs of the end, the millennium, and the last battle.

**Grace** started the year with a study of Matthew 24, in light of the September 11, 2001 terrorism attack on America. The rest of the year was spent doing a topical study of the book of Proverbs using a set of study guides that consisted of 18 different topics on the Christians life found in Proverbs.

**Grandville** began the season the last week in September and ended the 24th of March, one week after the Mass Meeting. The Junior Society did a topical study of Proverbs. They had study outlines for each week containing texts out of Proverbs that would help them understand the topic they were studying for the week. The study outlines also included questions pertaining to the topic. Some of the titles were: "Instruction in the Truth", "Obeying the Instruction Given", & "Knowledge is Important". In addition, they took a couple of weeks to discuss Rev. Dick's article on dating. They ended the year discussing "Respect for Authorities." The Senior Society, for the most part, studied the life of David and how we lead similar lives and are faced with similar decisions and hardships. They used a book about David, written by Arthur Pink, for their study. A couple of times they dealt with issues such as being good stewards, the role of women (in church and in society), and what to say to co-workers who either want to know more about our beliefs or challenge us with alternate lifestyles.

**Hope (Walker)** meets from the beginning of September until the end of April. The Junior Society began the year by studying the book of Esther. When they finished Esther they started on Daniel. The Senior Society studied I Samuel. They looked at the way Saul acted in his kingship, disobeying God in many instances, and applied these things to their lives, realizing that by nature they are no better than Saul. They ended the year by studying David in his kingship.

**Hull** had a topical study of Proverbs this year. They met from October through March. They had 39 members this year, so they split into freshman/sophomores and juniors/seniors. They met together at the beginning of

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the night for the business meeting and then split up to discuss the topic of the night.

**Immanuel** meets from September through May. The Bible study was from Genesis, using Rev. Harbach's book as a study guide. For after-recess various articles of current interest were discussed, mostly from the *Beacon Lights*, but also from the *Standard Bearer*. Subjects included dating, drama, music, and human cloning.

**Kalamazoo** meets every Sunday, September through April. They have been studying James. The first Sunday of the month they meet at somebody's house and discuss other topics. A few of the recent topics were: How Could September 11 Affect Us?, How We Should Celebrate Christmas, Pursuing a Godly Marriage, Bringing Up Covenant Children, and Appreciating Our Parents.

**Loveland** meets from September to April, with the summer months off. This year they finished off the book of Daniel, studying Daniel 5-12. They then started the book of Romans and studied through chapter 3.

**Lynden** meets from October to April every other Sunday. They studied the parables using *The Mysteries of the Kingdom* as a guide. The first two meetings were

introductions to what parables are, their purpose, and why Jesus spoke in them.

**Randolph** meets the first three Sundays of each month from October through April. On the first and third Sundays of each month they study out of the book, *Saved by Grace*, by Rev. Hanko and Rev. Cammenga. On the second Sunday of each month the young people take turns choosing various special topics.

**Southeast** meets from September to April. The Senior Society studied the book of Ephesians.

**South Holland** studied I Corinthians 2 and the book of Jonah. For after-recess they covered the topics of Sunday observance, tithing, abortion, the importance of Christian education, dating, adoption, choosing a proper career, witnessing, and the distinction between fate and providence. Their society meets the first and third Sundays of the month from September through April.

**Southwest** Senior Society studied Romans and the Junior Society studied the Gospel according to John.

**Covenant Protestant Reformed Fellowship of N. Ireland:** The young people join the adults in their mid-week Bible study due to the smaller number of young people. ❖

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## Pastor Profile

# Rev. Audred Spriensma

edited by Kris Moelker

In October of 1954, Rev. Audred Spriensma was born in Zeeland, Michigan. He is the son of Thomas and Jessie Spriensma. When his parents came to the United States from the Netherlands in 1949, they were told they should join the Christian Reformed Church. In 1990, his parents left the CRC and became members of Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church.

While he was growing up, Rev. Spriensma lived in Rusk, Michigan and then in Jamestown, Michigan. He spent his grade school years at Hudsonville Christian School and then he at-



tended Unity Christian High School which is also located in Hudsonville, Michigan. After graduating from high school, he went on to Calvin College and then Calvin Seminary in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

While he was a teenager, Rev. Spriensma did not experience peer pressure. Being raised on a rural farm setting, he had lots of work to do every day. He did not have a lot of idle time on his hands, nor did he have the luxury of spending a lot of time with friends who would have influenced him for bad or good.

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During his college days, Rev. Spriensma met Alva Van Vugt. They both worked at Pine Rest Hospital and Alva would ride with him to Calvin College. They started running together in Physical Education. After dating for about a year, they were married in May of 1977 and then they went together on his first summer assignment from the seminary to Clinton, Ontario. The Lord has blessed them with five children, two boys and three girls. Their daughter, Esther, married Brad Langerak and the Spriensmas are now the grandparents of a little boy, Carter James. They see God's faithfulness to their children and their children's children.

As early as the second grade, Rev. Spriensma remembers God calling him to serve Him as a minister or a missionary. He really did not question this calling while he was growing up. In college, he did try to run away from this calling because of the liberal environment in the CRC. So he took some education classes. The Lord would not let go of him, and therefore he found himself at Calvin Seminary preparing for the ministry. Loneliness while he was growing up also prepared him for the loneliness that can be part of a minister's life.

As he was growing, Rev. Spriensma does not remember having any hobbies. His studies and work on the farm took up all of his time. He still doesn't have any hobbies.

When they knew of his desire to enter the seminary, Rev. Spriensma's parents were joyful that he had a desire for this calling. From what he remembers, there was not a great reaction from his family and peers. They expected it.

During his first year of seminary, Rev. Spriensma did not meet many theologically conservative students. He was lonely and thought about quitting Calvin and going instead to the Protestant Reformed Seminary for a couple years. After he was told that courses taken there would not transfer back to Calvin, he decided to stay. The next year several students came from Westminster Seminary who were more conservative.

After he graduated from Calvin Seminary, Rev. Spriensma was ordained in 1981 and became the pastor of the Atwood Christian Reformed Church in Atwood, Michigan. In 1984, the Lord sent him to serve the Bethany Christian Reformed Church in South Holland, Illinois. After eight years, the Lord called him to leave Bethany and the Christian Reformed denomination. In 1992, he was admitted into the ministry of the Protestant Reformed Churches and became the pastor of Grandville Protestant Reformed Church in Grandville, Michigan for nine

years. Now the Lord has sent him to begin his labors as Missionary to the Philippines.

While he was a student at Calvin, Rev. Spriensma had to teach Catechism at Kelloggsville Christian Reformed Church. They had to try out new instruction materials. In one of these new materials, the doctrine of total depravity was denied. So every year they would have to look for older catechism materials that were suitable for the children. During his labors at Bethany Christian Reformed Church, the elders approved his using the Protestant Reformed materials for his catechism instruction.

As a minister, it is rewarding for Rev. Spriensma to witness the growth and development of covenant youth through catechism and profession of faith, dating and marriage to a Godly spouse, and bringing forth children, and God's faithfulness in establishing another Christian home.

Concerning controversies, Rev. Spriensma has memories of those in which he was involved in the CRC. He and the consistories in his first and second charges were involved in writing overtures and protests to Classis and Synod. He also has memories of the controversies surrounding the history of the Concerned Members of the CRC, the Christian Alliance and the beginnings of the Independent Reformed Churches.

Rev. Spriensma has memories of coming to the PRC. He remembers the day he decided to leave the CRC and seek admission into the PRC by way of colloquium doctum. He broke the news to his congregation at the worship service on Ascension Day. The day he was examined by Classis West was interrupted by a protest against the examination and also a severe thunderstorm that knocked out the electricity for a while. He remembers how mean some folks acted towards him and his family in this upheaval in their lives and also the love and care that others showed them.

To young men who are considering the ministry of the Word to be their calling, Rev. Spriensma has this advice: "Be sure of that calling." As a minister on a Classical student committee and as a member of the Board of Trustees of a seminary, he has heard all different reasons why young men have sought the ministry. There can only be one reason that sustains and carries one through the difficulties of the ministry. God calls a man and will not let him go. I Corinthians 9:16 "...for necessity is laid upon me, yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel."

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Regarding the thinking, attitudes, and behavior of the young people, Rev. Spriensma reminds us that we live in a materialistic world. “Children grow up thinking that they are entitled to every thing dad and mom have and then some. We need contentment. We need to learn what sacrifice is.” Young and old need to be more open and accepting of others, rejoicing in our diversity,

rather than demanding that we all are alike and think alike.

Rev. Spriensma is encouraged to see that our young people ask good questions about our confessions, are eager to learn and are eager to confess their faith. ❖

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

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From the Pastor's Study

# The Third Pointer on the Spiritual Roadmap: Using God's Name Rightly

by Rev. Doug Kuiper



**T**hou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain. Exodus 20:7

*O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!* Psalm 8:1, 9

Young people, our God has a name.

In fact, Scripture uses many names and titles to refer to Him. Among them are God, Lord, Jehovah (I AM THAT I AM), Jehovah of Hosts, the Holy One, and the Almighty One.

Interestingly, however, Scripture never speaks of God having *names* (plural), but always of His *name* (singular). Remember the baptism formula? It is a quote from Matthew 28:19: “...in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” Even though each person of the Trinity is mentioned, the word “name” is singular, teaching us that God has only one name. Also in the third commandment, quoted above, and in the first petition of the Lord's Prayer (“Hallowed be thy name”), the word name is singular.

God has one name!

Scripture always speaks of His name in the singular, because His name is His revelation of Himself. That revelation

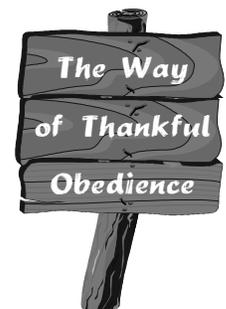
has several aspects; but basically it is one revelation of one God.

One aspect of this revelation is the various names which we use to refer to God.

Another aspect of this revelation is Scripture. All of Scripture is God's name.

A third aspect of this revelation is Jesus Christ. Scripture proves this; for though in Matthew 28:19 Jesus required baptism to be in the name of the Triune God, yet in Acts 19:5, we read of baptism in the name of the Lord Jesus. Jesus IS the name, the revelation, of the Triune God.

A fourth aspect of God's name, His revelation of Himself, is His works. Psalm 8:1 and 9, also quoted above, speak of God's excellent name. This is interesting, for Psalm 8 itself speaks of God's work of creation, especially His creation of and dealings with man. Answer 122 of the Heidelberg Catechism also shows that God's name includes His revelation of Himself in His works. Go read that answer for yourself.



What do you think of God's name, young people? How do you use His name?

With this question, we arrive at the third major intersection on The Way of Thankful Obedience. Do we think of His name, and use His name, as His law requires us to? Doing so, we will be brought along our journey, glorifying God in all we do. Or do we think lightly of His name? Blaspheme it? Laugh at it? Use it without thinking? Use it frivolously? Use it in jokes? Against such use, the third commandment warns us. Those who use God's name this way, God will not hold guiltless.

We must confess right now that we often use God's name wrongly. Every day, you and I violate this command of God's law.

By ascribing God's attributes to His creatures, we do. God is holy. Cows and smoke are not. To say they are holy, is to take God's name in vain.

By using His name without fear and reverence, we do. We should begin our prayers by addressing Him by name. But often we use His name in prayer without calling to mind who He is, to whom we pray. When we read Scripture, we should do so devoutly, not casually. But often we read it in a hurry to finish, so that we can do other things. Or, when we are surprised or shocked by something, and we utter the words, "My God," or some other words which are an abbreviation of one of His names or attributes, we take His name in vain.

By making jokes about spiritual, holy things, we do. Jokes about or including God, Christ, heaven or hell, or Scripture are instances of taking God's name in vain.

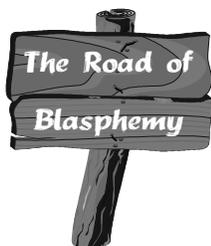
By failing to ascribe to Him all power and glory in all that happens in history, we violate this commandment.

By twisting Scripture to make it appear to say what we want it to say, we sin against this law of God.

Or, by taking an oath in a courtroom, calling upon God to witness to the truth of what we say, all the while intending to lie to the judge (how big or how little the lie is does not matter), we do!

So many ways! And these are only a few instances of many possible!

One can understand why the Jews of old tried not to use God's name—especially, the name "Jehovah"—at all. If we so easily use it wrongly, and the punishment



for that is so severe, it might seem better that we not use it. But God does not give this as an option. We *must* use it, for we must confess Him, and His sovereign control over all. He commands us to pray to Him, to address Him, to read His Word, to use His name—but to use it with fear and reverence.

How often, young people, we must repent of our sins of using God's name in vain. Doing so, we will find forgiveness, and grace to use it rightly, in Christ. How wonderful God is, for not holding Christ guiltless, that His righteousness might become ours! For only those whose punishment Christ bore, will not be held guilty any longer—Christ bore our guilt for us.

In gratitude, let us walk the Way of Thankful Obedience.

And in gratitude, let us use God's name with fear and reverence.

Use it, indeed! Pray! Read Scripture! Speak of spiritual things, in your talk one with another!

But do not use it in vain, lightly, frivolously, without purpose.

How can we obey this commandment sincerely, from the heart?

Of course, we know that Christ will give us the strength to do so, for we are His servants. So, first, we must pray for that strength. And we must pray for grace to serve Him *willingly*. Such prayers God will answer. God will give His grace to young people who sincerely seek it of Him!

Second, we must think often and deeply about God. We must think of His infinite greatness; His holiness; His righteousness; His infinite knowledge; His great wisdom; His never-ending love; think of all His attributes! We must think of all His works—of creation, of providence, of salvation of His church, and of His salvation of *us* personally. When we truly understand His greatness, we will be the more ready to obey this commandment from our heart.

Then, by His grace, we will say: "How excellent is thy name, O LORD, in all the earth!" We will sing it! We will confess it! We will pray it!

From our heart! ❖



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*Rev. Kuiper is pastor of Randolph Protestant Reformed Church in Randolph, Wisconsin.*

# The Pursuit of Holiness

reviewed by Randy Vaalburg

*The Pursuit of Holiness* by Jerry Bridges, Paperback, 158 pages, The Navigators, 1978.

**T***he Pursuit of Holiness* by Jerry Bridges is a brief book about just that—pursuing holiness – from a Reformed, biblical perspective. In short, this book is a concise, easy-to-read manual on holy living for the Christian. The author makes known that the title of the book is based on Hebrews 12:14: “Follow [pursue] . . . holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.” He explains, “The word *pursue* suggests two thoughts: first, that diligence and effort are required; and second, that it is a lifelong task. These two thoughts form a dual theme throughout this book.” (p. 15, ch. 1, “Holiness Is for You”). Further explanation of what “pursuing” entails can be found in chapter 8, titled “Obedience—Not Victory”:

We need to brace ourselves up, and to realize that we are responsible for our thoughts, attitudes, and actions. We need to reckon on the fact that we died to sin’s reign, that it no longer has any dominion over us, that God has united us with the risen Christ in all His power, and has given us the Holy Spirit to work in us. Only as we accept our responsibility and appropriate God’s provision will we make any progress in our pursuit of holiness.

By stressing the believers’ responsibility to separate from sin, Bridges is not advocating the “touch not, taste not, handle not” practices of the holier-than-thou legalist. He warns of the errors that surround this legalism, such as Pharisaic “endless lists of trivial do’s and don’ts” and Quaker-like concerns for “specific styles of dress and mannerisms” (p. 19). Rather, the author makes a very good point about Christian responsibility. The main part of that responsibility is the subject of chapter 9, “Putting Sin to Death”:

The action we are to take is to put to death the misdeeds of the body (Romans 8:13). Paul uses the same expression in another book: ‘Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature’ (Colossians 3:5). What does the expression put to death mean?

The King James Version uses the term mortify. According to the dictionary, mortify means ‘to destroy the strength, vitality, or functioning of; to subdue or deaden.’ To put to death the misdeeds of the body, then, is to destroy the strength and vitality of sin as it tries to reign in our bodies.

How lacking this is among so many “religious” people today who practice just enough outward morality to keep out of trouble! Daily crucifying one’s old man of sin also goes against the “let go and let God” philosophy that even conservative, doctrinally sound Christians can fall into if they focus far more of their spiritual energy on thinking about their personal salvation rather than on obeying Christ in all areas of life. This is dangerous because the war against the old man—our depraved natures—involves a great spiritual battle (Rom. 7:15-25). Many practical tips on how to fight this battle with the Word of God through personal discipline can be found in chapters 10, “The Place of Personal Holiness” and 14, “Habits of Holiness.” In chapter 3, several reasons are given as to why holiness is a requirement for the Christian, not an option.

Bridges does not promote holy living on the basis of works-righteousness. In a facts-over-emotions approach to what constitutes good works, he puts at ease the mind of the careful, Reformed reader by referring to Isaiah 64:6, stating that our own righteous deeds are but filthy rags in God’s sight. Says Bridges, “Our best works are stained and polluted with imperfection and sin. As one of the saints of several centuries ago put it, ‘Even our tears of repentance need to be washed in the blood of the lamb.’” (p. 36). Regarding the source of these good works, the author explains, “We are dependent on the enabling power of the Holy Spirit to attain any degree of holiness” (p. 79-80). And, “It must be clear to us that mortification, though it is something we do, cannot be carried out in our own strength... Mortification must be done by the strength and under the direction of the Holy Spirit” (p. 87). The author, it seems, confesses with Isaiah and all truly Reformed believers: “Lord, thou wilt ordain peace for us: for thou hast wrought all our works in us” (26:12).

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*The Pursuit of Holiness* is theological, replete with Scripture references on nearly every page. Yet, it is not confined to the realm of truth-in-the-abstract; the author makes an earnest effort to show the reader how to apply Scripture to one's daily life. For example, Bridges describes a simple system based on three verses in

1 Corinthians for determining whether a particular activity is good or evil. It asks such practical questions as "Is it helpful—physically, spiritually, and mentally?"; "Does it bring me under its power?"; "Does it hurt others?"; "Does it glorify God?". The author aptly remarks, "These questions can get rather searching. But they must be asked if we are to pursue holiness as a total way of life" (p. 91).

In his thought-provoking book, Bridges brings up pertinent questions that can weigh on the Christian conscience:

"If holiness, then, is so basic to the Christian life, why do we not experience it more in daily living? Why do so many Christians feel constantly defeated in their struggle with sin? Why does the Church of Jesus Christ so often seem to be more conformed to the world around it than to God?" (p. 20).

To these questions, Bridges offers three brief, but insightful answers by problem areas that often plague believers.

First, "our attitude toward sin is more self-centered than God-centered. We are more concerned about our own 'victory' over sin than we are about the fact that our sins grieve the heart of God" (p. 20).

Second, "we have misunderstood 'living by faith' (Gal. 2:20) to mean that no (conscious, RV) effort at holiness is required on our part" (p. 21). The author explains, "We must face the fact that we have a personal responsibility for our walk of holiness" (p. 22).

Third, "we do not take some sin seriously. We have mentally categorized sins into that which is unacceptable and that which may be tolerated a little bit." (p. 22). And, "Are we willing to call sin "sin" not because it is big or little, but because God's law forbids it? We can-

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What outstanding feature does this book about the holiness of God and the Christian have over so many other books similar to it?

Namely, the author does not paint a beautiful—perhaps breath-taking—picture of God's holiness, only to dump a bucket of paint on the same by also portraying Him as a helpless being whose will to save is often frustrated by grace-denying sinners.

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not categorize sin if we are to live a life of holiness" (p. 23).

The problem areas identified by Bridges are attention-grabbing. They are areas in which the Reformed Christian can slip. The author's explanations and brief solutions to them are biblical and practical. The reader is strongly encouraged.

Notwithstanding its many strengths, the book is weak in its explanation of the antithesis for the child of God. Mention is made of the fact that we are but "pilgrims and strangers" on this earth and that it is our duty to remain "unspotted from the world." However, no Scripture references are made to Psalm 1, Psalm 119:63, 2 Corinthians 4:14-18, Ephesians 5:3-7 and the many other passages in Holy Writ that refer to the duty of believers to keep from friendships with those who stubbornly persist in living impenitently in their sins.

What outstanding feature does this book about the holiness of God and the Christian have over so many other books similar to it? The author does not paint a beautiful—perhaps breath-taking—picture of God's holiness, only to dump a bucket of paint on the same by also portraying Him as a helpless being whose will to save is often frustrated by grace-denying sinners. Bridges is no Arminian. He freely acknowledges: "Holiness, then, is not necessary as a *condition* of salvation—that would be salvation by works—but as a *part* of salvation that is received by faith in Christ. The angel said to Joseph, 'You are to give Him the name Jesus (which means 'Jehovah is salvation'), because He will save His people from their sins' (Matthew 1:21)" (p. 39). *Jesus* saved us from our sins! "So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy" (Rom. 9:16).

*The Pursuit of Holiness* will be a helpful aid for any Christian who recognizes his or her profound need to brace up against the lusts of the flesh that militate against the spirit (Gal. 5:17). I highly recommend it to all who read this. ❖

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

# John Calvin

by J. P. deKlerk

**J**ohn Calvin (Johannes Calvijn) was born on July 10, 1509 with the name Jean Cauvin, in the city of Noyon, in the Northern part of France. His father was Gerard Cauvin, the son of a skipper from Pont-l'Evêque (near Noyon), where he was in a leading position in all kinds of religious and business organizations. His mother was Jeanne le Franc, a well-known God-fearing woman.

For his education the young Calvin went first to the Collège of the Capetten (friars), but then he decided he preferred to go with his friends (sons of Louis de Hangest, master of Montmor) who received home-schooling, regarding life from a higher plane.

Father Gerard recommended that John become a priest, so in 1521 John accepted an appointment as chaplain for a small consideration.

In 1523, after the death of mother Jeanne, Calvin went with the Montmor family to Paris. There he studied in the Collège de la Marche, and was taught in French and Latin. Soon he went further at the Collège of Montaigu (where it was very dirty and bad for his health), led by Noël Beds, who taught him how to dispute. Noël Beds was outspoken against a translation of the New Testament in French (the common tongue) when the first one was printed (made by Le Fèvre d'Étaples), but Calvin supported this.

The Inquisition came in Paris in 1525. Calvin secretly studied the Bible with his relative Pierre Robert Olivier until 1528 when his father sent him to Orleans. (He said he should study law there.) The following year Calvin went to the University of Bourges. Then he studied at both universities, but he preferred learning the Greek language from Melchior Wolmar, who was a fol-

lower of Dr. Martin Luther, and they began a study of the New Testament together. Calvin started to visit and evangelize the farmers of Bourges. You see an old engraving here of that time. This was very much appreciated and encouraged by Margaretha of Angoulême (Queen of Navarre), who protected the Huguenots as much as she could. She was a sister of King Francis I of France (1515-1547), known as Francois de Valois. For political reasons, he did not



support the pope most of the time, but later he refused to listen to a written plea of Calvin for the Reformed people.

In 1531, Calvin's father died. Calvin decided to go to Paris, and started to study literature at the Collège des Trois Langues, which was founded by the king, but disliked by the leadership of the Sorbonne university. In those days, Calvin lived not far from the Sorbonne, in the rue Valette, Number 21. He went to secret meetings with other Protestants (Huguenots) where they studied the Scriptures, while they had watchposts being on the look-out against henchmen of the Inquisition.

In 1532, the first book of Calvin was printed. It was a commentary about a book of Annaeus Seneca, the famous stoical Roman, titled *About the Meekness*. He wrote however also a speech to be used by Rector Nicolas Cop (November 1, 1533) about Matthew 5:3 (Reformation viewpoint).

After that, he had to flee from his enemies, but at the request of Margarethe he returned, but soon he had to leave again, and this time he went to his friend Du Tillet in Saintonge, where he lived under the pseudonym Charles d'Espeville. He had a big library at his disposal

and could find there all he needed for the writing of his "Institution."

He started travelling and came in contact with many like-minded important people, in cities like Nérac, Noyon, Angoulême, Poitiers, Orleans, Metz, Strassburg (there he preached four times a week and was paid one guilder for taking the trouble) and Basel (Switzerland). He preached sometimes in German. He wrote *Psychopannychia* (a book against the Anabaptists). He wrote an introduction in the complete translation of the Bible in French, made by Olivetanus.

In 1536, his famous *Institution of Teaching in the Christian Religion* appeared in print; he was then 26 years old. In 1539, he made the first hymnbook for the Church, with 18 Psalms (for 8 of them he made the melody himself). Later another book with all the Psalms was made (melodies of Maître Pierre, Louis Bourgeois and Matthias Greiter).

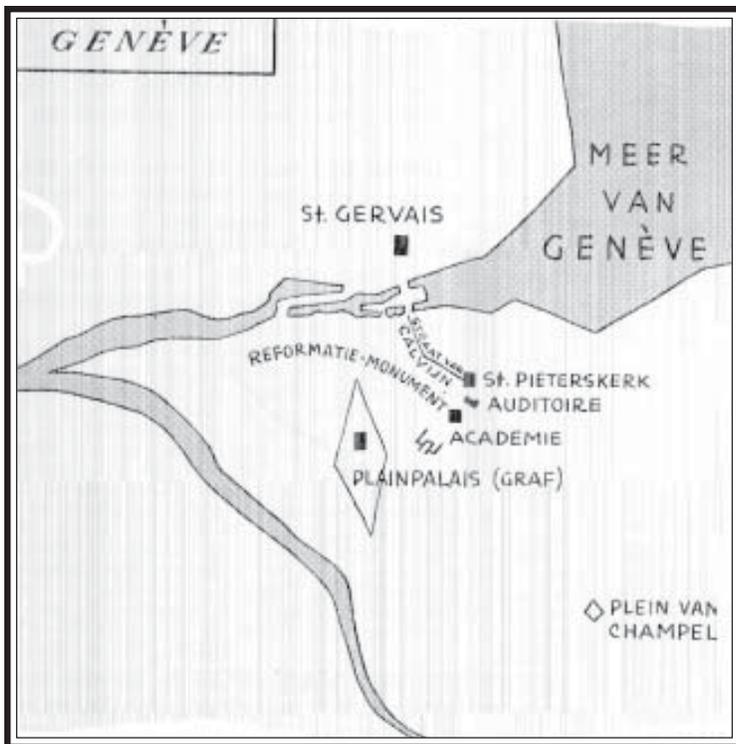
In those days, he also wrote the *Testimonium Spiritus Sancti* (about the Holy Spirit) and his first exegese (comment) about the letter of the Apostle Paul to the Romans.

With his friend Du Tillet he was for some time the guest of another sister of King Francis I, the Duchess Renata of Ferrara, who was of the Reformed faith; he had correspondence with her during his whole life. When he travelled from her palace to Basel, he was stopped by a war between Francis I and the emperor Charles V, so that he had to choose another road, which brought him to Geneva, where the Reformer Guillaume Farèl begged him to stay. He did that, from July 1536 until April 1538.

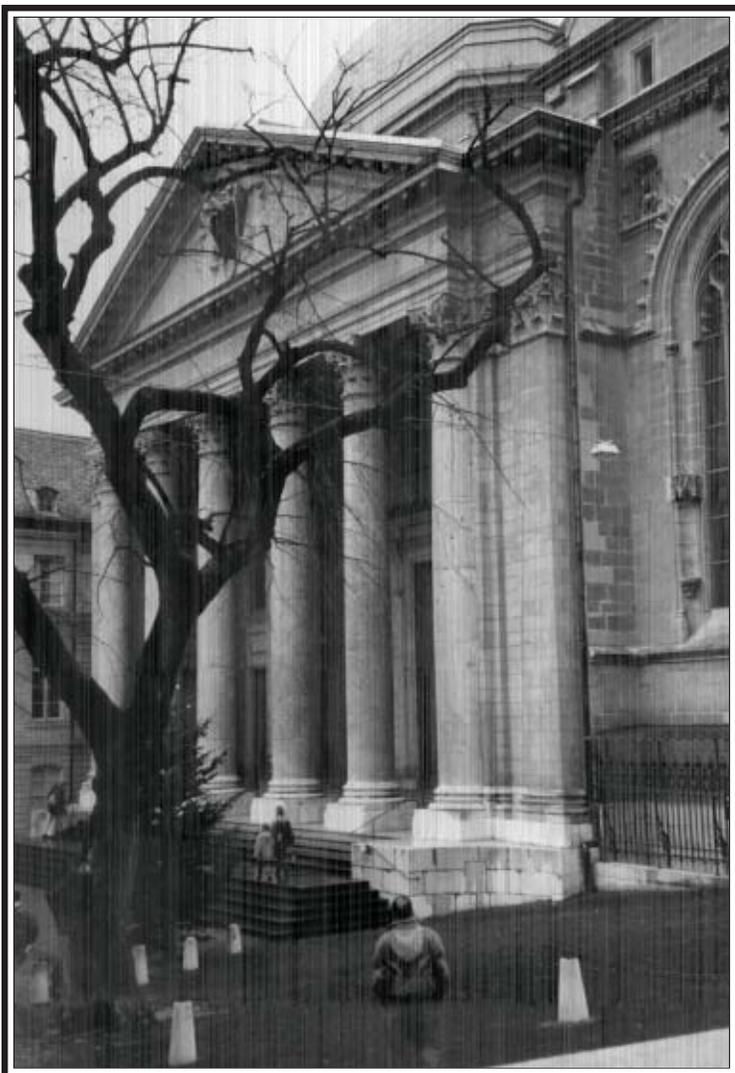
Now, in Geneva the only reformed cathedral in the world is found. In 1534, this building was given to the local reformed congregation, who removed all the statues outside and inside.

It has to be known that the French speaking people make a distinction between a Protestant Church (Temple Reformée) and a Roman Catholic Church (Eglise Catholique), but the Reformed Cathedral of St. Peter (Saint Pierre) was not altered. It is a huge building with a very high round ceiling in the middle. Calvin and Farel preached here for thousands of people, already in this first period. The second period was from September 1541 until May 1564.

However, at the request of the Reformed Congregation of Bern, a religious discussion was organised in Lausanne with leaders of the Roman



The Lake of Geneva with the city. The St. Peter Cathedral is in the center, at the Street of Calvin, with the "Auditoire" opposite. The Reformation Monument is next to the building of the Academy. Calvin was buried in Plainpalais (grave not found).



The Reformed Cathedral of St. Peter in Geneva. Here numerous sermons have been given by Dr. John Calvin and Dr. Guillaume Farel.

Catholic clergy about the justification by faith only, etc. This was from October 1 through 8, 1536. At first only Farel was speaking, but then Calvin came forward with his astonishing amount of knowledge, quoting Tertullianus, Chrysostomus and Augustinus. He convinced the majority and won them for the Reformation. His reputation was founded and in Geneva the Reformation became a fact in 1537.

His articles about the government of the church were accepted by the municipal council. The meeting of the consistory agreed about having Holy Supper once a month in one of the three local churches. He gave them an "Instruction for the Confession of Faith." People who

were against the Reformation had to leave the city. This led to serious conflicts in the council as well as the consistory. On April 23, 1538, the reformers were told to leave the city...

They went first to Bern, then to Basel, but they were asked by a refugee congregation to come to Strassburg, at the request of Rev. Capito. The members liked singing the psalms Calvin brought with him, but without the use of an organ, because they did not want to be reminded of the Roman Catholic churches; the psalms were translated into German. Calvin introduced a new form for the baptizing, forbidding anabaptism (rebaptism).

In August 1540, Calvin married Idelette of Bure, the widow of Jean Stordeur of Liege (southern part of The Netherlands, now known as Belgium), who had two children. Calvin and Idelette had a son together, but he died soon.

He continued discussions with Roman Catholic priests, in 1539 (Frankfurt), 1540 (Hagenau), 1540-1541 (Worms) and 1541 (Regensburg). In Frankfurt he became friends with Melancthon. In Regensburg he tried to push the French and the German kings and knights in the direction of a peace treaty, but he did not succeed.

In the meantime there were problems in Geneva, because the ministers who had taken over in the Reformed Churches, were not able to stand the dangerous Roman Catholic bishop of Carpentras, who was humanistic in his approach and clever as a fox. They asked Calvin to send him a reply in writing. He did that in 1539, in six days, and wiped the slate clean with the authority of the Scriptures. This was a triumph for the Reformation. Geneva asked him to come back to the churches there as soon as possible.

On September 13, 1541, John Calvin returned indeed to Geneva. There were internal problems in the church to be solved straight away, like the refusal of Sebastian Castellio, who could not become a minister because he refused to accept that Solomon's Song (the Canticles) were part of the Bible, and he said it was wrong to say that Jesus had been in hell (in the Geneva Catechism). Angry, he left the city (1545). A bigger problem were the Libertines, led by Pierre Ameaux (manufacturer of playing-cards, which were forbidden). He abused Calvin and had to do penance openly (1546). A former friend of Calvin, Ami Perrin, became furious because his wife had been dancing and was punished

for that by the consistory (Calvin did not want Geneva again to become a worldly city) and his father-in-law because of divorce. The physician Hieronymus Bolsec was forced to leave the city, after he had repeatedly contested the predestination (1551). He published later a book with slanderous accusations against Calvin.

Meanwhile in Paris the third edition of Calvin's book, *Institution of Teaching in the Christian Religion* appeared in the bookshops (in Latin). The Roman Catholic government grabbed as many books as it could and burned them in public in front of the Cathedral of Notre Dame (with the bells ringing) on February 14, 1544.

German Roman Catholics organized opposition against the teachings of Calvin on a large scale, approaching in a crafty way some of his friends, who didn't have the courage or knowledge to defend themselves. Famine and the plague were no help. But Calvin was very disappointed when he discovered that former friends were suddenly against him.

Calvin still wanted pure christianity in the city. The inhabitants had to stick to the strict laws for their behaviour.

Calvin tried to come to a religious agreement with the Lutherans, in a correspondence with Joachim Westphal and Tileman Heshusius, but he could not come to a satisfactory conclusion.

He exchanged also several letters with the fanatic Spanish physician Michael Servet, who was even rejected by the Libertines. He was caught by them and killed, against the wish of Calvin.

Calvin's wife, Idelette, died, in 1549. This was really a shock for him because she had always loved, supported and encouraged him, regardless of all his problems.

In the same year, however, the followers of Calvin and Zwingli came to an agreement, named the "Consensus Tigurinus."

In the Spring of 1555, the city council of Geneva accepted the reformed faith in a democratic way because the many refugees, who were followers of Calvin, had become the majority. This brought the churches nine years of peace (1555-1564).

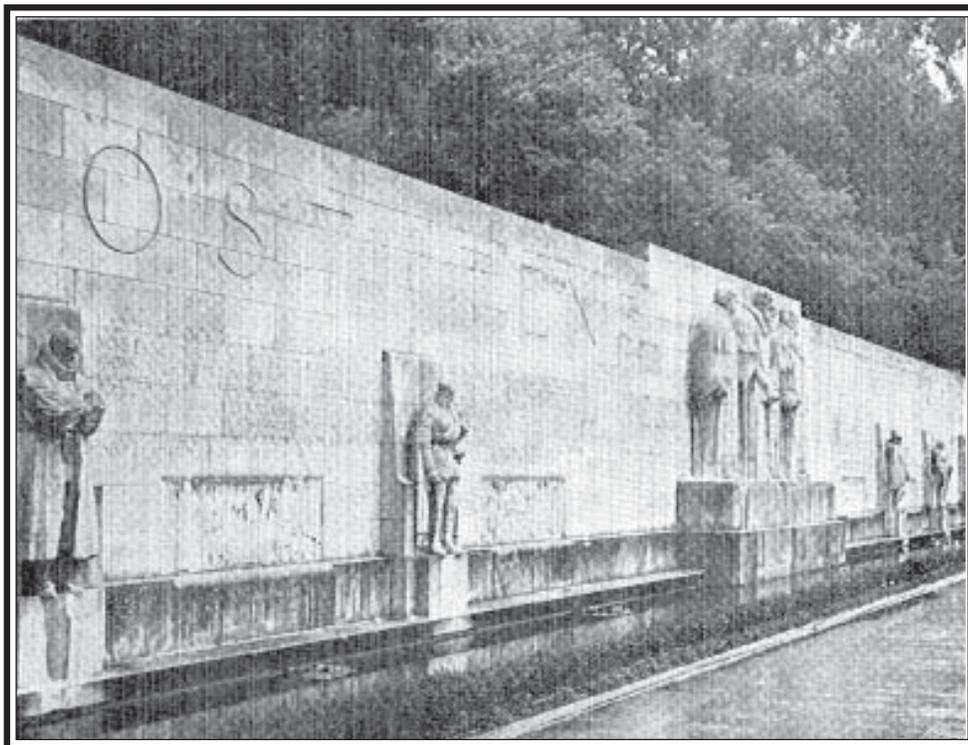
On June 5, 1559, the Geneva Academy was founded, with four theologians in the "Auditoire" (a kind of concert hall with rooms for smaller meetings). The first rector was Theodorus Beza (1519-1605) who was known for his active resistance against the Church of Rome. Over the years, many theologians (professors) have worked there, close to the Reformed Cathedral of St. Peter, like Hugo Donellus, Lambertus Danaeus, Scaliger, Casaubonus, John Knox, Marnix van St. Aldegonde, Caspar Olivianus, Fran-ciscus Arminius, Wten-bogaert and Vorstius.

In the same year appeared Calvin's fourth edition of the *Institution*. He tried to unite all his followers in different churches (the Protestants), and worked day and night, with correspondence in many countries.

He often did not feel well, but he remained productive as defender of the faith, the Bible and the reformation till his last day on earth. ❖

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



Monument of the Reformation in Geneva

September 13, 1541

# "LITTLE LIGHTS"

*... let it shine!*

by Connie Meyer

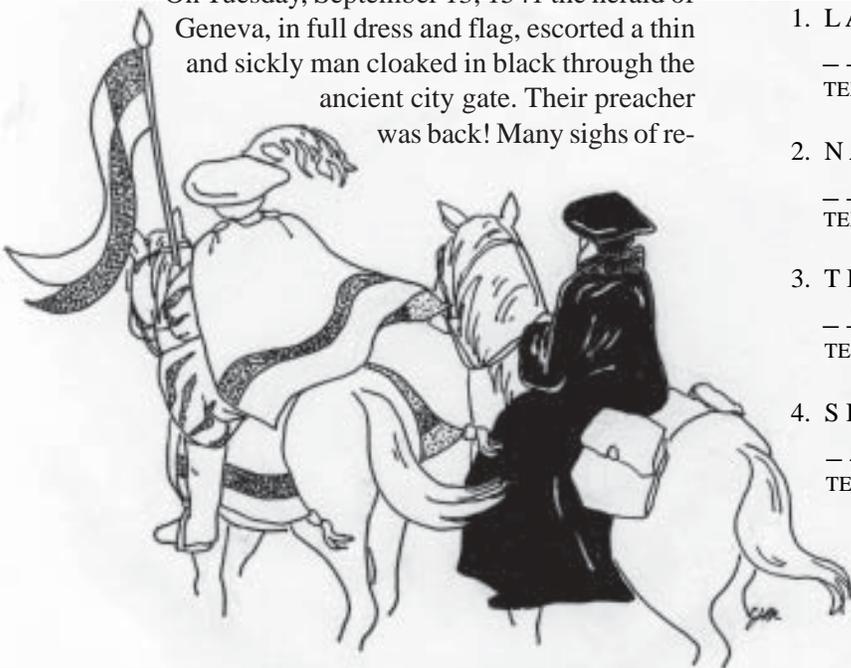
"Rather would I submit to death a hundred times than to that cross..."

So wrote the young minister of the church of Geneva, Switzerland. Amid lake and mountains, Geneva was one of the most beautiful places in all of Europe. But its beauty was lost on this man. It was the threats, the swords and clubs, the awful hatred of the city that haunted his memory and rang in his ears. He had preached the word of God there. He had preached it boldly, clearly, and to the glory of God. But the council and the people did not want to hear it, and most of all—they did not want to live it. He was cast out of their midst and told not to return. Only by the watchful care of their heavenly Father did he and his fellow pastors leave alive and unharmed.

Now this city wanted him back. But John Calvin did not want to come back. Not to that wicked city again, not to that abominable cross! Months had passed. Letters arrived to persuade him to come. The truths of the Reformation were only now being discovered, developed, and understood. John Calvin knew and understood those truths perhaps better than any other man at that time. Through even more controversy and trouble, the church of Geneva came to see what they had lost. Oh, if only John Calvin would return!

Their prayers were finally answered.

On Tuesday, September 13, 1541 the herald of Geneva, in full dress and flag, escorted a thin and sickly man cloaked in black through the ancient city gate. Their preacher was back! Many sighs of re-



lief and prayers of thanks were heard within the city walls that autumn day.

It was not to a life of ease that John Calvin returned. He knew that. There were still those who hated him. But God wanted him there; that's what mattered. God would use him in this city to develop, teach, and spread the truths of Scripture through all of Europe and all the world. We study his writings yet today for the clear and unarguable outlines of the Christian faith that he set down. What a blessing to the Church that God raised up men like John Calvin to lead His flocks into evergreen pastures of truth. What a blessing that He leads us still today. ❖

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

**Some of the truths that John Calvin saw in Scripture are called the "Five Points of Calvinism." Unscramble the letters to name them. Can you find texts to prove each point?**

1. LATTO REAVYPDIT

-----  
TEXTS:

2. NATOCDUINNILO TOELINEC

-----  
TEXTS:

3. TIMEDIL MEANOTTEN

-----  
TEXTS:

4. SISTERBRAILE EAGCR

-----  
TEXTS:

5. RAVESIPTROEN FO HET TISSNA

-----  
TEXTS:

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### BAPTISMS

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

*Mark 16:16*

The sacrament of Holy Baptism was administered to:

Ashley Paige, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. DJ Bultema—Byron Center, MI  
Joel Daniel, son of Mr. & Mrs. Daniel Knott—Byron Center, MI  
Marie Renae, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Scott DeYoung—Byron Center, MI  
Arianne Marie, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Scott Van Uffelen—Faith, MI  
Matthew Patrick, son of Mr. & Mrs. Lou Gagliardi—Cornerstone, IN  
Gise William, son of Mr. & Mrs. Tim VanBaren—Cornerstone, IN  
Brittney Beth, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Kevin VanOverloop—Holland, MI  
Owen Brian, son of Mr. & Mrs. Brian Kalsbeek—Hope, MI  
Leah Dawn, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Loren Gritters—Hull, IA  
Aubrey Marie—daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Craig Van Briesen—Hull, IA  
Crysta Elizabeth, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Bob Bos—Loveland, CO  
Micah Jacob, son of Mr. & Mrs. Matt Regnerus—Randolph, WI  
Dirk Nathaniel, son of Mr. & Mrs. Peter Smit—Redlands, CA  
Darla Rae, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Paul Kamps—Southeast, MI  
Jordan Michael, son of Mr. & Mrs. Tyler Pipe—Southeast, MI  
Allysa Joy, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Duane Bruinsma—South Holland, IL  
Mia Sharon, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Larry Leoni—South Holland, IL

## Church News

Caleb Joseph, son of Mr. & Mrs. Ryan VanOverloop—South Holland, IL  
Jane Elise, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Joe Mancusi—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:  
Steve Prim—Cornerstone, IN  
Ashley Ferguson—Edmonton, Alberta  
Karla TeSlaa—Doon, IA  
Joel VanEgdom—Doon, IA  
Kelsey Van Bommel—Doon, IA  
Ben Wiersma—Doon, IA  
Brad Wynia—Doon, IA  
Kyle Bleyenburgh—Edgerton, MN  
Dan Kooienga—Faith, MI  
Mike VanTil—Faith, MI  
Joe VanOverloop—Faith, MI  
Jim Bruckbauer—Faith, MI  
Jamie Mol—Faith, MI  
Chad Richards—Faith, MI  
Jeremy VanDyke—Faith, MI  
Jim VanBaren—Faith, MI  
Kim Terpstra—Holland, MI  
Tara Reitsma—Hudsonville, MI  
Michael Brands—Loveland, CO  
Beth DeJong—Peace, IL  
Justin Verburg—Peace, IL  
Michelle DeJong—South Holland, IL  
Michelle Worries—South Holland, IL  
Joanna Zandstra—South Holland, IL

### MARRIAGES

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

*Matthew 19:5*

United in the bond of Holy Matrimony were:

Mr. Michael Klaasens and Miss Heidi Kleyn—Edmonton, Alberta  
Mr. Russell Tolsma and Miss Vanessa Zylstra—Edmonton, Alberta  
Mr. Philip Lenting and Miss Stacy Elzinga—Faith, MI  
Mr. Brian Decker and Miss Audrey VanderSchaaf—Faith, MI  
Mr. John Pipe and Miss Sherry Van Overloop—Faith, MI  
Mr. Jon VanDyk and Miss Janis VanBaren—Faith, MI  
Mr. Corey Terpstra and Miss Brenda Doezema—Holland, MI  
Mr. John DeVries and Miss Rebecca Pols—Holland, MI  
Mr. Aaron Knott and Miss Melinda Barnhill—Hudsonville, MI  
Mr. Kent Hoksbergen and Miss Sandee Alsum—Hull, IA  
Mr. Nathan Schiermeyer and Miss Lisa VanMaanen—Hull, IL  
Mr. Brian Bruinsma and Miss Stacy Bleyenburgh—Peace, IL  
Mr. Nathan Postmus and Miss Lisa Bruinsma—Redlands, CA  
Mr. William Smit and Miss Faith Van Meeteren—Redlands, CA  
Mr. Joel Kooienga and Miss Lisa Jabaay—Southeast, MI  
Mr. Joseph Venema and Miss Rachael DeJong—South Holland, IL  
Mr. Joel Holleman and Miss Brooke Rispens—South Holland, IL