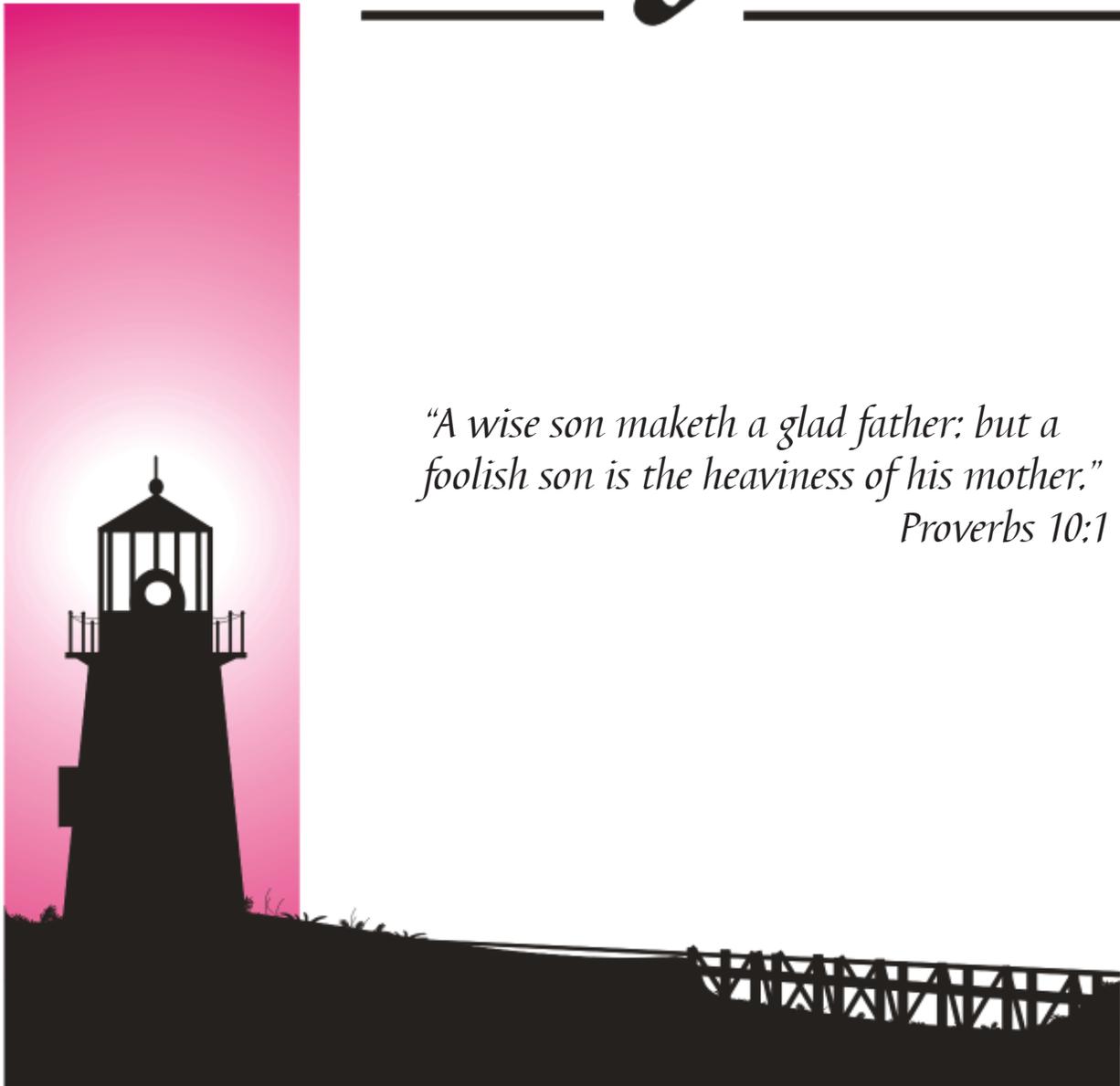


Beacon Lights

May
2003

Volume LXII
Number 5

*"A wise son maketh a glad father; but a
foolish son is the heaviness of his mother."
Proverbs 10:1*



BEACON LIGHTS

Table of Contents

	EDITORIAL
3	A Note of Thanks
	FRUITFUL BRANCHES
4	It's Not Just a Movie
	THE READER ASKS
6	Why Is the Church Not Encouraged to Go Out on Door-to-Door Evangelism?
	STORY TIME
7	A Writing Contest For You
	CREATION THROUGH THE SPECTACLES OF SCRIPTURE
8	Of Boats and Birds
	PASTOR PROFILE
10	The Life and Times of D. H. Kuiper, B.S. and V.D.M.
	DEVOTIONAL
13	Watching Daily At My Gates
	MUSIC
17	Ten Commandments and Music (Part 2)
	CHURCH FAMILY
18	Why I Want to Teach in a Protestant Reformed School
	WHERE WE STAND
20	Arminianism (4): Events Leading Up to the Synod of Dordt
	CHURCH HISTORY
22	George M. Ophoff (7): High School and College
	GEMS OF THE MONTH
25	My Mother Mother's Day
	LITTLE LIGHTS
27	The Cannon of Canons
	CHURCH NEWS
	Back Cover

EDITOR

John Huizenga

ASSOCIATE EDITORS

Aaron Cleveland

Randy Vaalburg

SECRETARY

EDITORIAL STAFF

Jeff Kalsbeek

David Langerak

Kris Moelker

EXECUTIVE FEDERATION BOARD

Trevor Kalsbeek (President)

Kevin Gritters (Vice-President)

Audra Bol (Secretary)

Brad Pastoor (Treasurer)

Jeanine Boeve (Librarian)

Rachel Kuiper (Vice-Secretary)

Brad VanderVeen (Vice-Treasurer)

Jim Holstege (Youth Coordinator)

Rev. Barry Gritters (Spiritual Advisor)

BUSINESS OFFICE

Beacon Lights

P.O. Box 144

Randolph, WI 53956

Phone: (920) 326-6186

Email: huizenga@powercom.net

BEACON LIGHTS ON TAPE

A free service to the legally blind. Contact

Sam Copple

659 Lincoln Ave. NW

Grand Rapids, MI 49504

Phone: (616) 774-4132

Email: SamCopple@email.msn.com

CHURCH NEWS ANNOUNCEMENTS

Melinda Bleyenbergh

Email: darylme1@altelco.net

BOOK SALES

Becky Kalsbeek

TYPESETTER

Robert Vermeer

PRINTER

James Huizinga

MAILER

Staff

Beacon Lights is published monthly by the Federation of Protestant Reformed Young People's Societies. Subscription price is \$10.00. Please send all correspondence, address changes, subscriptions, and article submissions to the business office.

EDITORIAL POLICY

The articles of *Beacon Lights* do not necessarily indicate the viewpoint of the Editorial Staff. Every author is solely responsible for the contents of his own article.

The *Beacon Lights* encourages its readers to contact the business office with any questions or comments. Letters may be edited for printing. We will not publish anonymous letters, but will withhold names upon request.

If any material of *Beacon Lights* is reprinted by another periodical, we will appreciate your giving the source and forwarding the printed periodical to the business office.



A Note of Thanks

As editor I would like to thank everyone who has shown their support for the work of *Beacon Lights* with notes and words of encouragement. It means a lot to me as well as the staff. We really appreciate it when someone thinks about *Beacon Lights* when they read a good poem, article, or story someone has written, and send it in for us to consider for publication. We are grateful to those who are willing to risk exposing their heart and soul and send the fruits of their own written work to share with others. We would not be able to do this work without this kind of help.

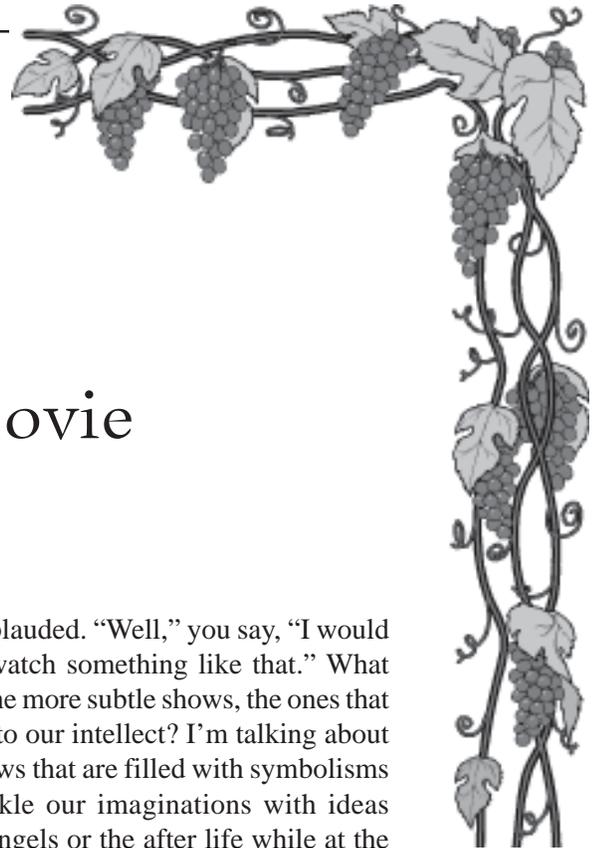
The pure preaching of God's word continues, and will always continue to bear much fruit, and it is very encouraging to see some of that fruit in the form of writing. What follows is a list of some date sensitive things to consider writing for in the future:

- Due April 20—material for Father's Day, Flag day, things related to the upcoming convention.
- Due May 20—Writing Contest (see details on page 7), material for Independence Day, Parent's Day, and again things relating to the upcoming convention.
- Due June 20—material for the beginning of school and catechism, Labor Day, Grandparent's Day, upcoming convention (note, August and September issues are combined).
- Due August 20—material for Columbus Day, United Nations Day, Halloween, Reformation Day, convention material.
- Due September 20—convention material, Election Day, Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving Day.
- Due October 20—Christmas material.

Those going to the convention, seriously consider keeping a diary of events, thoughts, and ways in which you grew spiritually. Please contact *Beacon Lights* NOW and we can arrange to reimburse your registration fee for good convention reports and/or photos.

Please continue also to remember this work in your prayers.

Yours in Christ,
John Huizenga



It's Not Just a Movie

by Trent Alan Van Bemmell

Brothers and sisters in Christ, I present to you (pardon the pun) a dramatization. The scene is Friday or Saturday night. Friend A calls up friend B and asks, "What's going on tonight?" Friend B says "Oh, not much, a bunch of us are going over to friend C's house; we'll probably just watch a movie or something." My friends, I ask you how many times this has occurred in your lives and with your group of friends?

As you can see from the title and the opening paragraph, the subject of this article deals with movies or more specifically—drama in movies and on television. It is my goal to address some concerns that I have about covenant young people and the involvement of viewing this drama in our lives. Also, I would like to take a look at what scripture has to say about the subject. And, finally, I will give some closing remarks and look at some sound advice.

We all know to different degrees that the subject of drama is a touchy one in our churches. Some have been shielded as much as possible from drama both on television and in movies by their parents. I would like to commend these parents as they "Train up a child in the way he should go" (Prov 22:6). Others have not been taught so diligently. True, they are not allowed to attend the theaters. But they are allowed to watch that same movie in the privacy of their own home. And the last group of young people has been left unhindered in their exposure to the television shows and movies that make up a large part of the culture around us. It is for these last two groups that I fear the most. Drama is a powerful tool that the Devil uses to tempt God's elect and cause them to stumble on the path that the Lord is leading them on. It creates a world devoid of Christ where cuss words and violence are a trivial matter. Guns, drinking, and sex are glorified

and applauded. "Well," you say, "I would never watch something like that." What about the more subtle shows, the ones that appeal to our intellect? I'm talking about the shows that are filled with symbolisms that tickle our imaginations with ideas about angels or the after life while at the same time they deny God's sovereignty and the very place of God and His elect—heaven. Or what about the ones that get us rooting for the main character regardless of the fact that he/she may be divorced or indulged in some other gross sin. Young people, we must not take part in this.

At first glance it appears that The Bible remains silent on this issue, but if you cast a searching eye you will be rewarded. The first text I present to you is Mathew 5:37, "But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil." This verse is a continuation of a group of verses discussing the subject of taking oaths. Jesus warns against taking oaths lightly and informs us of our positive calling—to show truthfulness in all our words and actions. Does drama violate this? The gifted actor is said to "take on" the personality, thoughts, emotions, and feelings of the character he or she is portraying. The gifted actor can suppress his own being and take on that of another. I ask you, is doing this not a lie? If a kind and gentle person takes on the being of, or acts like, a different cold-hearted, mean-spirited person that says things the person normally would not say, and does things that person normally would not do, is that person not lying in his words and actions? If we act like we are sick in order to get out of school or work, or if we act differently when certain people are around us, do we not give a false rep-

resentation of ourselves? Jesus tells us to avoid evil by telling the truth in our actions and to change nothing in our representation of the way God has fashioned us. “But,” you say, “that is the sin of the actor—not mine—I just watch it.” This argument, while it may seem logical at first, has no foundation. By just sitting there and viewing this sin—whether it be in a theater or on your own couch—by funding it with the money the Lord has graciously given you, and by letting this sin and those who commit it influence our speech, our clothing, or our hair style, we join hands with the world. We become servants of the world. We say what the world wants us to say, we spend our money how the world want us to spend it, and we look how the world thinks we should look. We throw away our goodly heritage and spit in the face of our heavenly Father when He says “Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?” (Rom. 6:16).

The second text comes from the first three verses of II Peter,

But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. (2) And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. (3) And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.

It is especially verse three that I want to look at here. The first part of the verse says that through or because of covetousness they shall with feigned words, or made up words (acting words), make merchandise of you or make money from you. I ask you, young people, how much money have you contributed to the false prophets and teachers—the “they” our text refers to? How much of your money (money that God has given you) have you spent on the “feigned words” of the world? The last part of the verse says that their judgment lingereth not, or that their judgment does not linger or delay; it is quick and obvious. It also says that their damnation slumbereth not or that their damnation is not asleep. It is wide awake and active in their lives. One needs only to scan the headlines from time to time to see this truth in the world. How many movie stars are not in and out of drug rehab, have had multiple divorces, or have had problems with

alcohol? How many of them lead peaceful and pleasant lives?

...we, being covenant young people, have a special calling with regard to the world. We are called to live the life of the antithesis, to be a “peculiar people” (Deut 14:2) of the Lord our God.

The world is very good at what they do. They make movies that entice us and draw us in. They peak our interest with dazzling effects and astounding imagery. Our sinful human natures crumble all too easily at the appeal of the world. But we, being covenant young people, have a special calling with regard to the world. We are called to live the life of the antithesis, to be a “peculiar people” (Deut. 14:2) of the Lord our God. We must only do those things that glorify God’s name. I leave you with some words of wisdom that you may use as a guide in all your activities whether they be on the weekend or throughout the course of the week.

Remember: you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord! And not to confess is to deny! This confession implies, moreover, that you would never voluntarily appear in any place where it would appear strange and awkward to confess Jesus as your Lord. It is well to remember this. To determine whether or not it is proper and partake of certain kinds of worldly amusements, we often proceed from the viewpoint of the question, “What is wrong with it?” It is more salutary to remember always your positive calling, confess with your mouth that Jesus, in Whom you believe, and of Whom you believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, is Lord! And wherever your very presence would be in conflict with that confession, so that it would appear absurd if you would make it, you have no proper place as a member of the body of Christ (Herman Hoeksema, *God’s Eternal Good Pleasure*, pg. 158). ❖

Trent is a member of Doon Protestant Reformed Church in Doon, Iowa.

Why Is the Church Not Encouraged to Go Out on Door-to-Door Evangelism?

Greetings in the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior,
Dear Pastor Laning,

First and foremost I am very thankful to God for the introduction of the new rubric “The Reader Asks” to our *Beacon Lights* Christian magazine.

My first question I would like to ask you is on evangelism. During the early church time, there were only two types of evangelism: *mass* and *personal* evangelism. Occasionally multitudes assembled to hear one of those Christians speak—especially where some outstanding miracles had occurred. As the people throng to see the miracle happening, the apostles embrace the opportunity by scattering the seed of the Gospel.

Today mass evangelism is done through conventions and radio broadcasts, as miracles have ceased and, moreover we have the complete word of God. But scarcely now would one hear of personal evangelism or “door to door” evangelism as it is usually called. It is true that we all cannot be preachers, meaning that one cannot be a preacher as well as the other, but it is also true that all Christians are *witnesses*. God has made the work of the ministry a distinct office from another, just as each of the members of our bodies its own distinct work, the eyes to see and the nose to smell.

But the question is who is supposed to be doing the work of personal evangelism? Why is nobody doing it? When I asked a couple of Christians why they would not go out on a door-to-door witnessing, they quoted Romans 10:14-15, and they even added the great commission of the Lord is for pastors and not for us. Yes I see that, but what I am talking about here is witnessing. Do I need a missionary call before I can win souls? Is it sin to even go abroad without a “call” to tell the gospel?

Why is the church not encouraged to go out on door-to-door evangelism? Christ commands us to “go out into the highways and the hedges and compel them to come in that my fathers house may be filled.” (Luke 14:23) Is every Christian a witness? Then why are we not encouraged to go on personal witnessing? You do well in saying we can witness through our actions as well as our

speech, but the question is why is the door-to-door witnessing fading out of the system? As you consider to answer these questions I would also like you to look at the following passages: Luke 15:1-10, Acts 20:20.

“The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise” (Proverbs 11:30).

David Afoakpah
Ghana Mission of the Protestant Reformed Churches in America

Response to David Afoakpah

Dear David,

It is a joy to receive a letter from a brother in Ghana, and to hear of your desire to witness to others concerning what you have come to know to be the truth of the Word of God.

Your main question has to do with why so few of us Reformed believers are out there going from door to door witnessing to others. This is an understandable question. When we know that we really do believe the truth, and that so many people walk in darkness, one might think that we should daily be going from house to house, telling others about the truth of the gospel. To support your idea that we should be doing this, you cite and ask me to comment on Acts 20:20, where Paul says to the Ephesians that he “kept back nothing that was profitable *unto you*, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house.”

It is certainly true that as Christians we are all called to witness to others, and to do this not only by our outward actions, but also by our confession of the truth. We are to look for opportunities to bring the Word of God to others, and we certainly rejoice when we see that God uses this to bring some of His people to repentance. The Luke 15 passage that you cite refers to this great joy. Although none of us can say that we witness to others as faithfully and as frequently as we ought, God does grant us the grace to do this more and more as we grow and mature in the faith.

But is door-to-door witnessing something that God commands? When we look at Acts 20:20, it is important to note that Paul is speaking to those who have already believed the Word that he has brought to them. It was to them that he preached not only publicly, but also from house to house. This going “from house to house” practice is still carried out today by faithful Reformed churches. For example, in the congregation where I am a member, all of the families, including my own, are visited by a committee of two elders once every year. During this visit God’s Word is taught and applied to the people of God, with specific applications being made to each family. We refer to this practice as “family visitation” or “house visitation,” and it is an example of the teaching from house to house of which Paul speaks.

But God in Scripture does not command His people to go from house to house among the people of the world in general. You are right that in Luke 14:23, we read of a lord saying to his servant, “Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel *them* to come in, that my house may be filled.” But we must remember that this is a par-

able in which an earthly relationship is set forth which pictures a heavenly and spiritual relationship. One who did not see this, might conclude that we are supposed to find people in the streets and use physical force to compel them to come into the church. We must consider the spiritual principle of the kingdom of heaven that is being set forth in this earthly illustration.

In this parable, God is setting forth the truth that the call of the gospel first went to many who rejected it, and then went elsewhere to others. This refers to how this call first came to the Jews, many of which rejected it, and that after that it began to go to the Gentiles, referred to here as those in “the highways and hedges.” That these people are “compelled” to come in, does not mean that they are compelled outwardly, but inwardly, by the irresistible power of God’s grace. On the one hand, it is true that God draws us unto Himself in such a way that we come willingly. But here in this parable it is emphasized that God will certainly gather every one of His people by the mighty and irresistible power of His grace, so that His house will be full.

Story Time

A Writing Contest for You Deadline is coming soon!!

Are you a student in school, a student in college, starting your first job, a parent, a farmer, a doctor, a teacher, secretary or a car salesman? It really does not matter what your station is in life. We are sure that you and every other reader have stories to tell which will serve to build others in our Reformed faith and give glory to God. Now is your opportunity to put your story into writing for some others to enjoy.

We know it is not easy to write, so here is some incentive. You have a good chance of earning a reward for your work: you could win one of six prizes. You fit in one of two categories. Writers currently in high school or younger are eligible for a \$100, \$50, or \$25 prize. Writers out of high school and older will be judged separately and are eligible for the same prizes.

God has given to each one of us many talents so let’s explore them and use them for the glory of God.

This is what we are looking for. The entries must be somewhere between 800 and 2000 words. That’s about two to four pages typed double space. The story needs to come from a distinctively Reformed perspective. This means, for example, that the characters or problem in the story should in some way convey our belief in a sovereign God who saves by grace alone and lives in covenant friendship with His people. We will leave the creative details up to you. The story could be historical fiction, fiction, or non-fiction. Finally, the entries must be postmarked by May 31, 2003.

Please send your entry to:
The Beacon Lights
P.O. Box 144
Randolph WI 53956

All entries must include your name, address, and which category you are writing for (high school and younger or post high.)

In our zeal for God and our desire to witness to others, we must remember this. God will certainly gather His people, and He will do it in the way that He has set forth in His Word. This means He will do it centrally by the official preaching of the gospel by the church, but that He will also make use of the personal witnessing of the members of His church. God calls each of us to be busy each day doing the work that He has given us to do. While we are doing this, we are to look for opportunities to witness to others, without forcing it. God controls every event of history, and will open these doors as He sees fit. Each day we should begin by seeking the grace of God in prayer to be a faithful witness, so that by our words and works His name may be glorified and His people may be gathered.

I thank you again for your letter, and hope to hear again from you and some of our other brothers and sisters in Ghana. We want you to know that we frequently remember you and the other saints in Ghana in our prayers. ❖

Do you have a question that has been on your mind? Something that came up at school or during a discussion with friends or co-workers? You can be sure that there are many more people reading these words who have had the same question and are looking for answers just like you. Rev. Laning of Hope Protestant Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan is waiting to answer them. Don't worry, if you would rather your name was not published with your question, we will honor your request. We do, however, ask that your name and either your home or email address be included so that Rev. Laning can respond privately if need be.

Please send your question to:

Rev. James Laning
1550 Ferndale S.W.
Walker, MI 49544
E-mail: jlaning@msn.com.

Creation Through the Spectacles of Scripture

When I In Awesome Wonder... The Golden Coast Of Michigan Of Boats and Birds

by Deane Wassink

I am fascinated by boats; especially sailboats. They are so graceful and quiet, but for the sound of the waves and the slapping of the sails and lines against the mast. I've watched them for hours on the lake. Watched them motor in and out of the harbor. Watched them tack and run with the wind. I've visited the tall ships. I've toured the whalers on the East Coast. I've read *Moby Dick* several times and carved small wooden sailboats. But, I've never sailed. Someday, hopefully someday soon, I'll have the opportunity. Pictures on the Golden Coast of Michigan often show a white sandy beach with white sails speckling the emerald waters of our sunlit, sparkling Inland Sea as the ultimate vacation destination for serenity and relaxation.

Another fascination for me as I consider the handiwork of God is the world of birds, as you can probably

tell from my many references to them. Their colors and shapes, their movement and habits provide an endless array of variety that shows the wonderful diversity of the creation as it reflects the beauty of its Maker. In fact those pristine pictures of the lakeshore would not be complete without several seagulls on the beach and a few more gracefully floating past on the breeze.

You may wonder why I've written about both birds and boats together. I hope that you are amazed as much as I am that the same scientific reason for birds to be able to fly (along with planes, I might add) is the same reason that sailboats can move so swiftly in the water and that they can sail into the wind. You see, the shape of a bird's wing and the shape of a sail are the same. God created the wing of the bird according to aerodynamic principles. Man, the crown of the creation and after many,

many design attempts, learned to copy those principles in the shape of a sail, and later an airplane wing.

I'll try not to get too scientific on you. Because air molecules must travel further over the top of a moving bird's wing or the rounded side of a sail in the wind, they travel faster than the molecules of air on the back side. This creates a low pressure on the top of the wing causing the air underneath to push it upward or forward, in the case of a sail. This shape is called an airfoil. When the lift on top of the wing is greater than the force of gravity the bird can fly. When the pull of the low pressure is greater than the drag of water against the hull of a boat, it moves forward.

As a child, and later as a teacher, I learned to demonstrate the working of an airfoil with an easy experiment. I would hold a sheet of paper by the corners crossways in front of my mouth and blow over the top of it. The moving air of my blowing causes the paper to lift instead of drooping downward, as you might expect.

What an amazing part of the work of the Creator we behold here. Because of the built-in order and physics of the behavior of air molecules over a moving airfoil, we have a whole world of unique relationships between creatures and an incredibly useful means of transportation for man. God created the thousands of species of birds with the ability to fly. He gave the proper muscles, skeleton and feathers for their size and food gathering needs. Before this wonderful diversity, adding also the other flying creatures of the world, we stand amazed at His handiwork.

The invisible and powerful force of the movement of air over an airfoil propelling and lifting boats and birds, reminds me of the powerful work of God on the hearts of His saints. Apart from God we are as ships with tattered sails driven by the waves to destruction on the rocks of the shore. Or, we are as a bird with broken wings falling to death on the hard ground. But God, in His great mercy and love for us draws His own people to Himself, delivering them from certain death. By the invisible and irresistible work of the Spirit, He lifts us to Himself. O sinner, repent of your foolish ways! Turn unto Him and He will lift you up. "But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint" (Isaiah 40:31). Our salvation is shown to be completely the work of God. It is His creation. In Him, find all your hope and salvation. Next time you observe the graceful movements of the boats and birds, be reminded of the wonder of the works of God.

BEACON LIGHTS

Keeper of the Deep

*Now each ripple follows the last,
Yet quickly arises the wild blast.
A picture of my life I see,
As if a boat my life would be.*

*When sailing on life's fitful sea,
And round me waves swirl and dance,
Lord keep my eyes firm fixed on Thee,
Lest assailed my heart thinks all is chance.*

*Lord of the wind, fill my sail,
Let not the storm o'er me prevail.
Without Thy sovereign hand to guide,
My ship would crash at eventide.*

*I see great waves and billows roll,
For the lost the bell doth toll.
Alone, I cannot make the stand,
But, smash to dust and join the sand.*

*Thy Word of Light a beacon shines,
Piercing dark of heart and fog of mind,
Guiding Thy chosen sailor home,
Till safely into Thy port I come.*

*Lord, teach me how to furl the sail,
To grip the tiller before the storm,
To run swiftly with the wind,
To tack steadfastly back again.*

*Lord, teach me how to read the sky,
To observe with weather eye,
To trust Thee when all seems becalmed,
To anchor when I'm safely home.*

*Thou art sovereign o'er the deep.
Through waves and billows, Thou dost keep.
Powerfully Thou sayest, "Peace be still"
And all the tempest flees Thy will.*

*Through pain and sorrow Thou dost keep,
Thy servant stumbling faint and weak.
Thou in love dost come to seek.
Thou savest me, O Keeper of the deep.*

*On Thee, O let me safely sleep,
My God, Great Keeper of the deep. ❖*

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

The Life and Times of D. H. Kuiper

B.S. and V.D.M.*

by Rev. Dale H. Kuiper

It was a dark and stormy night.....! A lot of stories begin with those words. Well, my life began exactly in that way. A blizzard raged throughout Northwest Iowa in November of 1935. The power went out on the 22nd, so that I was greeted by a few flickering candles in the parsonage of the Orange City Protestant Reformed Church. My father was Rev. H. H. Kuiper, and Orange City was his first pastorate. He died at the age of 56 in Loveland, CO. My mother (whom the doctor had assured would not give birth for some time yet, so he was elsewhere) passed away in 1998 at the age of 91.

Where did I grow up? There's no easy, brief answer to that since my father was a minister, and PKs grow up all over. Let's just say that I lived in six states as a boy and young man. The upside of that was the travel; how fascinating to explore the new parsonage and town! The downside was that friendships were always very brief. I envy, for that reason, those that have lived their lives in one county or state. Also, my five siblings and I were always the new kids on the block, always on the outside looking in but seldom really a part of things. It was difficult also because changing schools was always a rather constant thing. At times we had to attend the public schools; at other times we were sent to the local Christian schools. I am thankful that we were able to attend the then new Hope School for my last three years of grade school. Because my father took a call to our Randolph congregation, I boarded out with people in Grand Rapids so I could attend Christian High for three years.

I began college at the University of Redlands, a beautiful campus that many of you have visited when conventions were hosted by our Redlands young people. I finished college with a degree in Chemistry, and then taught for four years in Edgerton, MN, and at Hope



School. Looking back, I see how God used those four years of teaching in two positive ways. First, because I had always been rather quiet and withdrawn, teaching forced me to be more out-going, to develop speaking abilities, and how to deal with people, both students and parents. Secondly, those years of teaching were used by God to equip me for thirty-five years of catechism teaching, an important aspect of the covenant life of the church and a work that I still enjoy immensely. Occasionally, people will say to me, "We can tell that you've been a teacher." I'm not sure what that means exactly, but there it is.

I entered the Protestant Reformed Seminary in 1964. One regret that I have often reflected upon is that my father never knew that I entered the seminary and gospel ministry; he died during my senior year in college. I did inherit his library which was a great help to me during the past thirty-eight years. Seminary life has impressed many memories upon all who entered there. Classes were conducted in a room in the basement of First Church (Fuller at Franklin), a room usually too hot or too cold. We had Rev. H. Hoeksema for one semester, his last teaching before he had to retire. The work required in seminary was the most difficult I ever attempted, both as to the quantity and quality required. The first sermon text assigned to me for practice preaching was Hebrews 11:17-19, and I upchucked my breakfast before I went to school to (try to) preach it. A certain nervousness still overtakes me in the hours before I go on the pulpit.

God enabled me to persevere during those three years of training, so that I was ordained into the Ministry of the Word and Sacraments on October 1, 1967. Jesus Christ called and sent me to the following congregations: Randolph, Pella, Skowhegan, Maine as a missionary, Lynden, Isabel, Lacombe, and Southeast. After thirty-five years of service, twenty-five of them in the West, I became emeritus on January 1 of this year. I still perform some labors at Southeast until they receive a new minister, and plan to keep busy helping other churches as well, as God gives me strength.

Teaching little children has always been a delight for me, as it is to most pastors. I recall teaching a class of nine or ten year old children about Jacob and Esau. After stating that God loved Jacob and hated Esau before they were born or had done good or evil, a young fellow immediately burst out, "That ain't fair!" How true what Paul teaches in Romans 9:20 about natural man's reaction to God's sovereignty! I trust we got things straightened out for the lad. Another time I was teaching a lesson on the suffering and death of Jesus. A little girl began to cry. After class she came up to me to apologize, saying, "I'm sorry for crying, but it made me so sad." What a lovely response to the gospel!

Our churches need ministers and missionaries. Our churches need young men to study for four years beyond college to prepare themselves for a lifetime of preaching and teaching. Have you, young male reader, considered this need and your suitability for filling this need? Is Christ calling you to be one of His ambassadors? Often times this great question is very difficult to

answer. Perhaps the following questions, and your thoughtful answers to them, will assist you in coming to the right answer. You must pray about this matter often.

Have you, young male reader, considered this need and your suitability for filling this need? ... Perhaps the following questions, and your thoughtful answers to them, will assist you in coming to the right answer.

You must talk with your parents, teachers, and officebearers as to what they think of your suitability and gifts for this kind of work. But in addition, consider such things as these: 1) Do you love the church? Are you concerned for her welfare, her peace, her prosperity as the ground and foundation of the truth? 2) Do you like books, and do you love to read? Do you enjoy studying languages and grammar? Do you have an appreciation for history past, and especially for church history? Books, grammars, lexicons, commentaries, orthodox and heterodox writing of all kinds...these will be your tools as you labor in the Word of God according to the Hebrew and Greek. 3) Do you love God's people, and especially old people? I ask this not only because ministers must serve and assist a growing number of elderly in the churches, but especially because love for the aged and infirm reveals the presence of a tender, pastor's heart! 4) Are you committed to the Reformed faith of Holy Scripture, so committed that you are "resolved by the grace of God to adhere to this doctrine, and to reject all heresies repugnant thereto...." Yes, those words come from the second question for Public Confession of Faith. But as a minister you will be at the very forefront of that battle of contending for the faith! For the glorious truth of the Reformed faith, are you ready to suffer all, and lose all, even life itself?

I have been asked to comment on the question, have I seen any significant changes in the lives of our young people during the last forty years? That's a nice question to consider in our young people's magazine; a question that cannot be answered with a simple yes or no.

The past four decades of Protestant Reformed church history reveals very clearly that God is saving His children out of our generations by bringing our young people to faith in Jesus Christ, to confession of His great Name before God and men, and to a godly walk in the footsteps of Him Who has gone before us. I am thrilled and

I am thrilled and encouraged
by the faithfulness that our
young folks demonstrate, by
the grace of God, to the
Reformed faith that we hold,
and to the way of life that we
espouse.

encouraged by the faithfulness that our young folks demonstrate, by the grace of God, to the Reformed faith that we hold, and to the way of life that we espouse. There are always those that disappoint in these matters, that cast away from themselves all that is precious and holy (permanently, we do not know), even as the church always brings forth a two-fold seed. But God is faithful in providing us with good members of the church militant as one generation after another joins the church triumphant above, with leaders of the church of future years, and with fathers and mothers who will train up their children in the ways of the covenant. Surely we must recognize the work of our schools as a major means in these fruits. And let me add one more item of a positive nature; the young people on the whole are being faithful in church attendance, being present at both worship services. What a joy to behold!

Have I observed any trends that may be potential causes of concern? Of course I have. The age at which our youth are marrying has decreased significantly. Please don't ask me to prove this with scientific data, but a while back the average age was around 25-27, and at present it seems to be closer to 19-21. With marriage come children, heavy responsibilities, and often times heavy debt loads. Let us marry in the Lord, and look before we leap.

There have been some changes, I believe, in a couple of areas of Christian life that are of concern to many officebearers. This has come to my attention through being a church visitor in both Classes for many years.

Proper Sabbath observance is a concern. More and more activities are being allowed of a recreational, earthly nature on the day of rest. Secondly, there is a growing emphasis on leisure. Sports take up so much of our time; sports (active and passive) gobble up so much of our resources; vacations often times take us away from our churches and place us in very worldly environments. And thirdly, a definite decrease in respect for authority can be observed: parents in the home, elders in the church, magistrates of the state, and those who employ us at our work. We officebearers have many opportunities to address this issue in preaching and teaching, but the erosion goes on. We urge you to think through this issue in the light of Holy Scripture, and to hold fast the traditions you have received.

But on the whole, there is little change from the past and good hope for the future. To God alone be the praise!

Would you be interested in hearing some high points of my rather ordinary life? God gave me a faithful wife on August 20, 1965, when Velerie Miersma became my bride. The Lord then gave us nine healthy children: David, Bradley, Christopher, Bethany, Philip, Victor, Dwight, Lois, and Dana. I have had the privilege of baptizing most of our thirteen grandchildren. I recall meeting Dr. Klaus Schilder at my grandfather's house in Doon way back in 1946 or so. After being released from a German prison, he came to the United States to meet with Rev. Hoeksema and speak in our churches. I also visited Rev. Hoeksema, with my father after "HH" had a stroke and was recuperating in the Sioux Falls, SD, hospital. A statement that my father made fairly often, which made a deep impression on me was this: "I would rather be a minister of the Gospel than be President of the United States." He firmly believed his was the more important office, and the work he performed of everlasting importance.

Above all, the outstanding feature of my life has been God's faithfulness and grace to an unworthy, earthen vessel which enabled me to continue in the ministry all these years. Only by His powerful grace was I able to fight the good fight, finish my course, and keep the faith (II Timothy 4:7). ❖

**V.D.M. is an old-time abbreviation for the Latin Verbi Dei Minister, or Minister of the Word of God.*

Rev. Kuiper is an emeritus minister of the Word in the Protestant Reformed Churches.

Watching Daily At My Gates

by Chester Hunter

May 1 Read I Peter 4:1-11; Lord's Day 33 Q&A 90

Young people, what is joyous for you? In what do you find delight in this life? Is it things? Is it worldly happiness? This question and answer outlines for us what should be our joy. We should joy in living a life of thankfulness to God for the great salvation He has wrought for us in Christ Jesus. Is this your joy, people of God? Do we seek to live according to the will of God? Do we seek to walk in all good works in our lives? Are we happy to do such things? Let us examine our lives and live lives of joy founded on the quickening of the new man in Christ. Sing Psalter 24.

May 2 Read Ephesians 2:1-10; Lord's Day 33 Q&A 91

In yesterday's devotional we spoke of good works. What makes one of our works good? Is it acclaim from our fellow man? Is it some remuneration from someone? Is it even helping someone out of a tight spot? Today's question and answer describe for us exactly what God considers a good work. First of all, it must come from a true faith. This indicates who can do good works. Secondly, it must be done according to the law of God. There is the how of good works. Thirdly, it must be to His glory. That is the why of good works. Following these three principles assures us that we are doing good works in the right way and for the right purpose. Quicken the new man and do good works, people of God! Sing Psalter 246.

May 3 Read Psalm 19:7-11; Lord's Day 34 Q&A 92

Do you love God's law, people of God? Today's reading gives us the reasons why we should. God's law is the guide to our lives and the schoolmaster which points us to Christ. Obeying God's law is an important way to show gratitude for the salvation He has given to us freely. Sing Psalter 14:1-4.

May 4 Read Matt. 22:34-46, Lord's Day 34 Q&A 93

God's law is divided into two tables. Can we have one without the other? Absolutely not! Even as the stone tablets on which they were first inscribed by the finger of God showed us they are to be one whole. We cannot love God without loving our neighbor, and we cannot love our neighbor without loving God. If we say we can we are called liars by the Apostle John. Can we ignore one of the commandments? By no means? To do that would take from the completeness of them shown in the number ten. Let us strive to

keep these commandments and show gratitude to God for our salvation. Sing Psalter 321.

May 5 Read I Cor. 10:1-12; Lord's Day 34 Q&A 94

People of God, who is your God? This may seem like a strange question especially as you look at whom I am addressing. But the question still stands. Who is your God? To whom do we give honor and allegiance during our daily lives? Do we place our trust in Jehovah God for our daily bread, or do we trust in man's institutions such as welfare or the lottery? Do we submit to His will in all things, or do we seek to evade Him by moving away from churches which preach the pure word of God from Sabbath to Sabbath? Do we try to serve two gods? Do we add man's perception of what a god is to the Scriptures clear teaching about our God? This is forbidden by this commandment as well. If our only comfort in life and death is that we belong to our faithful Savior, than we must worship the God that gave us that Savior. Sing Psalter 322.

May 6 Read II Chron. 16:7-14; Lord's Day 34 Q&A 95

This question and answer singles out one aspect of breaking the first commandment. Here we are warned against idolatry. Do we have idols hanging in our houses, our cars, or our places of business? Do we fail to put our trust in our unseen God so that we might have something concrete to which we might look? This is thoroughly condemned by this commandment. However, we are more guilty of idolatry than we like to admit. We trust in our business, our farms, or our own ingenuity to make our way in this life. We must not do this. It is not the way of gratitude to the great God who has given to us our very being. Let us serve God and God alone. Sing Psalter 324.

May 7 Read Exodus 32:1-9; Lord's Day 35 Q&A 96

Let us considered the way we worship our God. How do we do that? Do we worship God as He has commanded us to in His Word? Do we add to what we find in the Bible thinking that we know better? Do we change parts of His prescribed worship for something we like better? Do we constantly seek change in order that our earthly desires are satisfied? There are many ways in which we can violate this commandment. Worship should be very precious to us. We should desire to serve God as He wishes us to in order that we can thank Him for all He has done for us. We should never be caught trying to please ourselves in God's wor-

ship. It is His worship after all. Let us not claim to be wiser than God as we worship Him. Sing Psalter 308.

May 8 Read Isaiah 46; Lord's Day 35 Q&A 97

Does it bother us that we serve an unseen God? Do we think that if we just had some concrete representation of God that it would be easier to serve Him? What about His creation? Could not that inspire us to worship Him better? Would not God be pleased with that? Once again we are trying to be wiser than God. His Word expressly tells us not to use things to represent Him for the purpose of worship. Israel of old had to learn that. They had to go into captivity to find out that God did not want to be worshipped by dumb images. Let us learn from them to worship our God in a way pleasing to Him. Sing Psalter 325.

May 9 Read II Peter 1:16-21, Lord's Day 35 Q&A 98

The authors of the catechism want to leave no doubt that we must worship and come to the knowledge of our God through the lively preaching of the Word and not through any kind of imagery. As we look to the Sabbath are we anxiously awaiting the call to worship God through the means of preaching? Do we daily search the Scriptures to learn more and more of our covenant God? God has given to us this wonderful book. Let us not disparage it in any way. Let us not put our ideas of interpretation into it. We can cause the Bible to become an image when we impose our desires upon God's will and word. Treasure the Scriptures, people of God, and rely on them along as you worship God. Sing Psalter 333.

May 10 Read Matt. 5:33-37; Lord's Day 36 Q&A 99

Do we like to hear our names spoken in a bad light? Do we bristle when our family's name is spoken evil of? What about the name of our God? How do we use it? Do we make light of its glory? Do we use it when things go bad against us? Are we silent when we hear others take it in vain? To take God's name in vain or to allow it to be taken in vain is a vile sin. The commandment itself tells us that God will not hold a man guiltless who takes God's name in vain. We must protect the glory of God. We must by our words glorify Him and not bring despite to His holy name. Let us not sin this sin, and let us seek to honor and glorify the name that is above all names. Sing Psalter 352.

May 11 Read Lev. 24:10-16; Lord's Day 36 Q&A 100

The catechism's authors want to drive home the point that God's name must be hallowed by us and by those around us. In this second question and answer on this topic they remind us that God in His Word pronounced the death penalty upon those who profane His name. Do we stop and think about that when we are tempted to take a curse upon our lips? Do we do more than blush when we hear God's name used evilly by those around us? We must think about these things and we must do more than think about them. We must be found actively protecting the name of our God. Sing Psalter 328.

May 12 Read Neh. 13:23-31; Lord's Day 37 Q&A 101

There is a positive side to this most serious of commandments. God's name may be used as security when the truth must be borne out. We may swear by God's name in court if it is required of us. We may call upon God's name in situations in which it is needed to assure the truth of the matter. But this does not allow us to do this lightly. First of all, we must tell the truth in these situations. Secondly, we may not make light of this procedure. If we sin in either of these two ways, we sin against the third commandment. The allowance to use God's name in this way must be done in only in a way that is pleasing to Him. Sing Psalter 334.

May 13 Read II Cor. 1:15-24; Lord's Day 37 Q&A 102

When we are called to call upon something or someone to affirm the truth of a matter, we may not swear by anything else but by God's name. This is because no one or nothing else can know the truth. This is because God is truth, and in Him is all truth. To swear by anything else would be to say that something else has God's attributes of truth. We may and must never do this. We must uphold God as truth even as we are swearing to the truth of a matter. Sing Psalter 336.

May 14 Read II Chr. 36:14-21; Lord's Day 38 Q&A 103

After being told that we must hallow God's name, now we are told that we must hallow His day. Did we prepare to do that today? Do we finish the old week with the first day of the new week in mind? How are we going to spend this day? How are we going to spend the *whole* day? The Lord's Day tells us that we are preparing ourselves for the eternal Sabbath. We must put as much effort into each and every Sabbath as we do into our national holidays. We must remember that Christ arose on the first day of the week and gave to us this day to remember that resurrection. To do this is an expression of gratitude that we must make part of our lives each week. Let us do that today and every Sunday. Sing Psalter 348.

May 15 Read Romans 13:1-8; Lord's Day 39 Q&A 104

We now come to the second table of the law; in this one we are shown how we must behave towards our neighbors. We are first told that in gratitude we must bow before all authority that God has placed before us. Notice that the command comes to us to obey. We must obey all authority that it pleases God to place over us. This might not be very easy at times. This may cause us great hardship either now or as the time for Christ's return draws nearer. But the commandment stands. God has given to us many opportunities to show gratitude to Him by obeying this commandment. Let us strive to thank Him in this way. Sing Psalter 223.

May 16 Read Matt. 5:21-26; Lord's Day 40 Q&A 105

This seems like an easy commandment to keep, doesn't it? None of us would take a gun, knife, or some other weapon and murder our neighbors, would we? But what about with our minds, our tongues, our faces? We can kill someone just

as dead with these weapons of destruction as we can with the other. In fact, when we examine our lives we find that we break this commandment quite often, don't we? We can find our faces on "most-wanted" posters often because of the commission of this sin. Let us daily pray for the grace to avoid this sin and that we love our neighbor even as we love ourselves. Sing Psalter 23.

May 17 Read James 1:19-27; Lord's Day 40 Q&A 106

How many times have we said, "I am going to get back at..."? Maybe we just said it. Little children, have you done this? Older children, have you worked at removing this sin from your lives? This Lord's Day reminds us that these kinds of words are the same as murder. There does not have to be a corpse for murder to have occurred. All it takes is a few ill-chosen words for murder to have been committed. We must work at fleeing from this sin. We must work to help our children flee from this sin. Let us ask God for the grace to do this now and every day until Christ returns. Sing Psalter 26:1-5.

May 18 Read Gal. 6:1-10; Lord's Day 40 Q&A 107

Now the catechism presents the positive side of this commandment. We must love our neighbor as we love ourselves. In the world in which we live a person loving himself seems second nature. A person loving his neighbor seems to be a hard concept to follow. What about us as brothers and sisters of Christ? Christ loved us while we were yet sinners even to dying for us. Do we reflect that type of love in our lives? Do we show this to all kinds of people? Or do we reserve our love for those whom we are confident that they will return our love? If we do, we have sadly misunderstood the sacrifice Christ has made for us. We can never repay Him for His love. We should never desire repayment for our love toward our neighbor. Let us seek to love our neighbor as ourselves and so keep this commandment. Sing Psalter 369.

May 19 Read Hebrews 13:1-9; Lord's Day 41 Q&A 108

Here is a commandment in which Solomon tells us that we wound both ourselves and our neighbor in committing this sin. James shows us the development of this sin as it begins in our hearts and springs into our physical lives. This is a commandment that the world has cut out of their list of the ten commandments. What about us? Are there still ten commandments that we try to keep in order to show gratitude for salvation? Does the manner of dress we employ indicate to those around us that this commandment is not so important? Does our attitude toward the divorces in our families indicate that we wish this commandment did not exist? If we wish to maintain the beautiful picture of the marriage of Christ and His church, we had better strive wholeheartedly to keep this commandment. Sing Psalter 93.

May 20 Read Eph. 5:1-8; Lord's Day 41 Q&A 109

Those of you who are house owners, how do you keep your house? If it is the place that you and your family dwell,

what does it portray about you? This is the figure found in this question and answer and in Scripture. What does the home of the Holy Spirit look like? Does it look like it belongs in the nice part of town, or does it appear as if it is in a place that "nice" people do not belong? This temple of the Holy Spirit, does it look like a temple? As we dress, as we speak to others, or as we communicate by gestures, do we show that our bodies are the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit? If not, then we must put some work into cleaning up the mess so that our bodies appear to be in a "nice" neighborhood. Sing Psalter 65.

May 21 Read Neh. 5:1-13; Lord's Day 42 Q&A 110

We might protest about the charge of robbery next to our name at judgment day. We might be appalled if someone called us a common thief. If these are our thoughts, then we need to reread this question and answer. Young people, from where did that last research paper come? Was it copied from some encyclopedia? Did you find it all finished for you on the Internet? If these were its source, you are guilty of sinning against the eighth commandment. Those of us who are employees have we given an honest day's work to our employer? If we have not, then we need to work at expressing gratitude by keeping this commandment. There are many ways in which we can break this commandment. Let us seek to stay clear of them. Sing Psalter 25.

May 22 Read Eph. 4:24-28; Lord's Day 42 Q&A 111

Notice several things about this question and answer. First of all, it again calls us to love our neighbor as ourselves. Secondly, it reminds us of Jesus's words about doing unto others as we would have them do to us. Thirdly, it admonishes us to work hard at our occupations. Finally, it reminds us to care for the poor. Were the writers of the catechism making this commandment say more than God intended? I do not think so. There is a connection in these things. That connection is once again gratitude. By loving our neighbor even as God and Christ loved us, we show gratitude for our salvation. By caring for the poor, we obey the injunction of Christ to care for the poor whom we always have among us. There is much that we can do in the positive keeping of this commandment. Let us seek daily to do it. Sing Psalter 305.

May 23 Read Acts 5:1-13; Lord's Day 43 Q&A 112

Again we are warned against sins of the tongue. We are admonished to flee from bearing false witness. We must show love to our neighbor with our tongues by not lying either to bring shame upon him or to cover up our misdeeds. We must not let Satan have control of our tongues as we speak to and about others. We must speak that which promotes our neighbor in all that we say. The adage not to say anything if we cannot say anything good about someone fits here. Do we do this? Do we do this when we whisper thinking that no one hears our evil speech? God hears us, people of God. He hears us when we speak evilly, and He

hates our evil speech. Let us seek God's favor as we talk to and about our neighbors. Sing Psalter 343.

May 24 Read Romans 7:1-7; Lord's Day 44 Q&A 113

The sin of covetousness is a sin from the heart. We must work hard at keeping this sin out of our lives. What is the reason for this? Of course, first of all, we must keep all sins from our lives. But, secondly, the sin of covetousness brings other sins into our lives. Rather than walk in sin we must from the heart seek to glorify God by walking in His ways. We must seek true thankfulness found in walking in God's laws. This takes much effort, people of God. Are we seeking to do this? Let us seek the help of our heavenly Father as we approach His throne of grace daily. Sing Psalter 335.

May 25 Read Romans 7:8-16; Lord's Day 44 Q&A 114

The catechism reminds us of our utter helplessness in this question and answer. It reminds us of the misery into which we daily plunge ourselves by sin. Then it tells us about the impossibility of our works being the way of salvation from this misery. What does this mean for us? Do we just give up? No, our beautiful catechism encourages us to begin to live the life of thankfulness to which we are called by striving to keep each commandment. By God's grace His people will do this. Once again let us seek His help at the throne of grace. Sing Psalter 338.

May 26 Read Romans 7:17-25; Day 44 Q&A 115

People of God, are you preparing for the future? Some of you might be saying "Of course." We are planting for next winter's food. We are having our children taught so that they can take their places in the world and in the church. That is not the kind of a future spoken of in this question and answer. The future spoken of here is eternal life. By giving to us the ten commandments, God has given to us the way to prepare for that future. By working at keeping these ten words we more and more ready ourselves for the life to come. Let us constantly do this even as the catechism's writers have admonished us. Sing Psalter 342.

May 27 Read Psalm 50: 7-15; Day 45 Q&A 116

God's people are meant to be a praying people. Does that characterize us? Do we use this chief part of thankfulness each day of our lives? Do we pray often in our lives? Do those around us know that we pray often? We must work at this. Because of our sin, this practice does not come naturally. But, as this Lord's Day teaches us, it is required. We need to pray for the grace to pray without ceasing. Let us not only do this for ourselves, but let us do this for our children and grandchildren. Prayer is a covenant activity, and we must pray with our families daily. Sing Psalter 137:1, 2 and 6.

May 28 Read John 4:19-24; Day 45 Q&A 117

What word might we use to describe a prayer acceptable to God? I think that the word humble might adequately describe those prayers. We must pray with humility. When we

pray we must pray to a sovereign God who has made all things. We must humble ourselves before His majesty. Finally, we must acknowledge that we are unworthy of ourselves to receive anything from Him. It is only from a humble heart that such prayers can be offered. As soon as we pray out of pride in ourselves and our accomplishments we must know that those prayers will rise no higher than the ceiling of the room in which we pray. When we pray in humility for all the bountiful blessings that He has given to us, we can pray in assurance that He will hear us. Sing Psalter 339.

May 29 Read Matthew 6:7-12; Lord's Day 45 Q&A 118

What are the bounds of the prayers that we offer to God? According to this question and answer, there is much for which we can pray. But there are three guidelines, I believe. First of all, we must pray for that which is necessary. Who defines necessary? Are we to define that ourselves? Does the church define it for us? The answer to both of those questions is no! God gives to us that definition. Necessary is what we need daily for our body and soul. That brings us to the second and third guidelines. We must pray for things for both our soul and body. We must! It is not an option. We are not to decide for ourselves for what we pray. Christ himself has told us to pray for things necessary for soul and body. Sing Psalter 242.

May 30 Read Luke 11:1-10; Day 45 Q&A 119

If Jesus' disciples asked the question, "Lord, teach us to pray," shouldn't we also? Jesus graciously has given to us the Lord's Prayer as a pattern for our prayers. In that prayer we find a complete pattern. We may use that prayer as it is written, but we may use that prayer to formulate those prayers which will be acceptable to our heavenly Father. As we examine this prayer let us use it to examine our prayers and see if our prayers are truly chief parts of thankfulness to God. For this, too, we must pray. Sing Psalter 233:1-4.

May 31 Read Isaiah 51:1-6; Lord's Day 46 Q&A 120

To whom do we pray? In this Lord's Day we find that we pray to our heavenly Father. The fact that we address Him as Father means that we are children. We must be as humble children seeking their father's blessing. This helps us see, first of all, the attitude with which we pray. We do not pray in pride; we must pray in humility. Secondly, because we are children means that we are incapable of doing any thing ourselves. Since we address God as father, we can with confidence know that He will answer us in a way that is good for us. Of course there is only one way that we can go to our heavenly Father and that is through Christ the mediator. Let us with childlike trust address God as our Father in each and every prayer that we pray. Sing Psalter 181.

Ten Commandments and Music (Part 2)

by Melissa Van Baren

There have always been subjects in the church that have been a bit harder to put a finger on what is right and what is wrong. There are some issues that Christians are at liberty to decide on by themselves (within the bounds that Christ has set). There are issues that we can see are dead wrong and then there are issues that we agree with. Some things will always be a struggle with the church. I'm hoping to shed a bit of light on some of those things that are hard to put a finger on in the area of music. So I'm asking you to read and judge for yourself.

Last time we considered music in the light of the first two commandments. Lest I become repetitive, I decided to lump the last few commandments together. They are all part of practical life living and it would be hard to do an article on each one without repeating myself.

Music is very much a part of life and must be held up to the light of the Ten Commandments. God has given these commandments for the rule of life and we need to follow them in all areas of life including that of music. Not one area of life should be excluded from the light of Scripture.

By "music" in this particular article, I mean especially the lyrics and words to the music. Music without the lyrics could be debatable as well but that would probably be best left for another article and someone who knows more about the psychological effects of music.

It is a bit simpler to stick with the lyrics of music as we hold it to the light of scripture. It is easy to label some music as right or wrong. On the one hand, God has given us music that we can sing and glorify Him with. On the other hand there is music that is (and we know is) wrong. Yet, there are some area of music that, well, are questionable. That is the type of music that we are going to hold up to scripture. I'm not going to discern for you but I ask you to seriously consider all areas and discern for yourself. So, keep your mind open, and consider with me.

There is lots of music that can fall into the questionable category. I've often thought about children's music. Could there be areas here that we should be careful with? What about folk music? What about the music that you listen to in the car? We must look at it all in the light of scripture.

Don't get me wrong; I think a lot of this music is neat. There probably is nothing wrong with some of it, but just consider with me the possibilities:

As I mentioned before, these commandments are those of more practical application. The third commandment talks about swearing and cursing, the fourth about keeping the Sabbath holy, the fifth about honoring father and mother and so on. They seem pretty simple. Yet we have much more light if we look at them through the eyes of our forefathers in the explanations that they give on the Commandments. The Catechism goes much further than just going to church on Sunday and not swearing. Those who wrote the Heidelberg Catechism saw very much the importance of explaining the Laws a bit more.

Let's look a bit more carefully in the light of the Catechism. (Take the time to look over the Catechism articles Lord's Day 34-44, specially paying attention to Lords Day 36 and following.) We notice by looking at these articles that different parts really pop out at us. In Q&A 99, it talks about rash swearing and profaning the name of God. Yet, if we read a bit farther, it says "nor by silence or connivance be partakers of these horrible sins in others." This is a pretty strong statement. We are not to silently listen to others take the name of the Lord in vain and swear or we also are guilty of that sin. It's scary to think about this *especially* when we think of all the times that we willingly listen to music that does this. We think that just by listening to it and not swearing ourselves in music we are ok, *but* we are not! So, don't be afraid and *do* turn of the filth that takes the name of our Lord in vain. It is such a heinous of a sin that "He has commanded this sin to be punished with death" (Q&A 100).

Consider the commandments with me a bit more. Parents, your children are a blessing sent to you to teach in the ways of the Lord. Through the songs that they hear and sing are they able to glorify God? Do they honor you as a parent? Through the songs that they sing do they express hate and dishonor to a fellow Christian also walking in this life? Parents, be aware of what your children are listening to and compare it to the word of God. Make sure that what they are listening to and what you are teaching them is not causing them to covet. Consider those “harmless songs.” This is our ultimate rule

in the walk of life and faith: to Honor God. We are to do this in music as well. Thus, walk more and more in the Commandments of God so that “we may learn more and more to know our sinful nature, and thus become the more earnest in seeking the remission of sin and righteousness in Christ” (Q&A 115). May God be with you as you grow in His Word and discern between right and wrong. ❖

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

Church Family

Why I Want to Teach in a Protestant Reformed School

by Michelle Key

“**F**or as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith, Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching...” (Romans 12:4-7).

As I take my place in the body, I must examine the gifts He has given me and develop them so that I can best serve others in the kingdom of God.

God has given each of His people a place in the body of Christ and gifts to use for the benefit of others. As I take my place in the body, I must examine the gifts He has given me and develop them so that I can best serve others in the kingdom of God. One of the gifts that God has given me to put to use among His people is the gift

of teaching, and I am studying to become a teacher in order to serve God and the people around me.

Each time an infant is baptized in our church, I am reminded of my calling to be an active servant. As the parents stand to answer the questions, the third question is also directed to me and the other members of the congregation. The parents answer, “Yes,” also for me when they promise “to see these children when come to the years of discretion (whereof you are either parent or witness), instructed and brought up in the aforesaid doctrine, or help or cause them to be instructed therein, to the utmost of your power.” This applies to each church member and is a serious calling for me and other teachers. As I make this promise and develop the gifts I have been given, it becomes clear to me that I must be a teacher in a Protestant Reformed School.

Since children are included in the covenant, they are to be respected and cared for along with other members of the church. As fellow-partakers with me of God’s grace, I love the children and care about their growth and development. As John writes (III John verse 4), “I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.” As they develop intellectually, our covenant children must also recognize God’s presence and power all around them and show spiritual growth. I am excited and eager to share the passion and joy of God that is in

me by being an instrument of God enabling students to see God's Providence in His creation. God is my peace, hope, and joy, and the thankfulness for the blessings He gives me naturally overflows to the children, "for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" (Matthew 12:34).

Because I see how God's Providence upholds all His creation, I want to teach children to also be able to see Him in all the subjects they learn in school. In a Protestant Reformed School I would be able to show students in a science class how God created and upholds His Creation and makes it work so perfectly and efficiently. They can also be reminded of God's grace and brought to humility as they see the vastness of creation and its intricacies on a microscopic level and stand in awe, wondering, "What is man, that thou art mindful of him?" (Palm 8:4). In a math class students discover the orderliness and patterns God created as they discover number patterns. His hand can also be seen guiding people throughout the history of the world, always working for the good of those who love Him and showing His power over even the greatest world powers. In a geography class students can learn not only about the physical and cultural environments of many people, but also learn about how people from every kindred, tribe, tongue, and nation were redeemed to God by the blood of the Lamb (Revelation 5:9).

When people in a secular environment ask me where I want to teach I often say I want to teach in a Christian school, not bothering to explain that I want to teach in a Protestant Reformed School, since they do not comprehend the difference between our schools and other Christian schools. Even within Christian circles it is difficult for people to understand that our Protestant Reformed Schools are very important to me and that they are different from other Christian schools. It is important to me to teach in a Protestant Reformed School so I can share my faith and beliefs completely, without compromising views that might oppose what others would teach. Attending a Christian college has made me more aware of the differences between the views our churches hold and the ideas of other denominations, and has made me desire even more to become a teacher in our schools, showing our children the truth and encouraging them to learn and internalize the truths of God's Word.

In a Protestant Reformed School I would wholeheartedly agree with the principles and doctrines being upheld and be able to teach the children as the parents would teach them at home. I would not be immersed in a

**It is important to me to teach
in a Protestant Reformed
School so I can share my
faith and beliefs completely,
without compromising views
that might oppose what
others would teach.**

teaching environment filled with views such as evolution, but would be able to help students to see God's creativity and power in creating everything out of nothing in six days. Common grace would be refuted; students would be taught to treasure God's amazing grace in the predestination of His people and learn to be discerning as they live in this world, whose culture is the opposite, the antithesis, of a Christlike life. False views of the end of the world would be opposed as students anticipate His Kingdom coming, gender issues would be repudiated and students would appreciate the unique places and roles God has given men and women in His Kingdom, and students would learn the importance of witnessing in modern culture, letting their lights shine in the world without compromising the Gospel.

A teacher must stand in the place of the parents while teaching the children of the covenant. I want to teach in a Protestant Reformed School because God has given me the gifts needed to teach His children in the place of parents and with the help of the parents I want to work along with parents to bring up their children in the fear of the Lord, because to "fear God and keep His commandments...is the whole duty of man" (Ecclesiastes 12:13). As I develop the talents God has given me, I do so not for my own benefit, but for the building up of the church, which I can do by teaching children that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge" (Proverbs 1:7). Parents and teachers work together to raise up the children of the covenant in the ways of the Lord. I desire to take up my calling in the church by teaching the youth about God and His dominion over all aspects of creation as they learn to take their places in His Kingdom, striving to live for their King.

"Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is

that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Romans 12:1-2). As I seek to sacrifice myself to God, I recognize my calling to fulfill His will by teaching in a Protestant Reformed School, having His Word, commands, and love on my heart. My calling is that “thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up” (Deuteronomy 6:7).

“Come, ye children, hearken unto me I will teach you the fear of the Lord” (Psalm 34:11). I will do this by being an example in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, and in purity” (I Timothy 4:12) as a teacher in the Protestant Reformed schools. ❖

Michelle is a member of Hull Protestant Reformed Church in Hull, Iowa. She wrote is article for the 2001 Protestant Reformed Scholarship

Where We Stand

Arminianism (4)

Events Leading Up to the Synod of Dordt

by Aaron J. Cleveland

In the last article we spent some time analyzing the character and personality of Arminius. We then went on to look at what God’s Word has to say about those who are teachers in the church. The lesson that we learned is that we are to evaluate teachers by the contents of the gospel that they bring. Of lesser importance is the pleasantness of their personality. The ministers of Satan transform themselves into the apostles of Christ and they come with good words and fair speeches to deceive the simple.

Knowing this about false teachers, we now move on to examine some of the events which took place while Arminius was still living, and events which took place that brought about the Synod of Dordrecht, 1618-1619. These events are recorded for us in what is known as the “Historical Foreword Addressed to the Reformed Churches of Christ.” This Foreword was attached to the *Acts of the National Synod of Dordrecht*. A copy of this Foreword can be found in *The Voice of Our Fathers, An Exposition of the Canons of Dordrecht*. The author, Prof. Homer Hoeksema, translated that Foreword into English and it is placed in his book before his exposition of the Canons. The Foreword makes for some very interesting reading for those interested in the history of that time and educates the reader as to why it was absolutely necessary that a National Synod be held in the Dutch

churches at that time. Throughout this article we will draw heavily from that Foreword for much of our information.

During the century before the Arminian controversy there was, for the most part, peace in the churches of the Netherlands. When certain men tried to introduce false doctrine into the church, they were dealt with in a proper way through church discipline. Some of these false teachers included Casper Coolhaas of Leiden, Hermannus Herbertz at Dordrecht and Gouda, and Cornelius Wiggers at Hoorn. These forerunners of Arminius, “having forsaken the papacy, but not having been fully purged of the leaven of the papacy, had come over to our churches and had been admitted to the ministry during the early period when there was a scarcity of preachers” (*Voice of Our Fathers*, pp. 46, 47). All of these men were in time “suppressed by the authority of the Government as well as by the carefulness of the Ministers and the appropriate censures of the churches” (*V.O.O.F.*, p. 47).

The doctrinal errors which these men introduced, Arminius advanced with more boldness. It is important to notice “that Arminius was not the originator of the Arminian heresy, on the one hand, but that he was led by and learned from others” (*V.O.O.F.*, p. 3). Prof. Hoeksema continues with this thought by adding,

And, on the other hand, it was not even Arminius personally who was condemned by the National Synod: for by the time our fathers served the antidote to the poison of Arminianism in 1618-19, the man who gave his name to the errors of the Remonstrants had long since passed from this earth into the realm of the dead. And yet, as we shall see, it is not without reason historically that the errors rejected in our Canons are popularly known as Arminianism (*V.O.O.F.*, pp. 3, 4).

This boldness of Arminius was practiced in a very crafty manner, for Arminius knew that it would not be to his advantage to suddenly and openly attack every truth of the Reformed faith. So he began his attack through more subtle means. One way in which he did this was by “belittling and blackening the name, fame, and authority of the most outstanding teachers of the Reformed Church—Calvin, Zanchius, Beza, Martyr, and others—aiming to achieve respect for himself at the expense of their good name” (*V.O.O.F.*, p. 47). Further, he spread views that were Pelagian in nature, and he did this among his fellow ministers, including Uitenbogaard. (We will discuss Pelagianism in a future article.)

Later, after he had secured his professorship at the Academy of Leiden by hiding his true convictions in a conference with Gomarus, he began to spread his views to the students he taught. He did not immediately teach false doctrine at the Academy, but waited for a short time and then he began to slander the doctrine as it was taught in the Reformed Churches. He did this by various means. “Both openly and secretly” he would “call them into question” and “create suspicion among his pupils” (*V.O.O.F.*, p. 49). Arminius “sought to render impotent the chief proofs by which those same doctrines were established from God’s Word” and “he exalted the proofs of the opposite doctrines” (*V.O.O.F.*, p. 49). Further, he put in a bad light the writings of Calvin, Beza, Martyr, Zanchius, and Ursinus.

Not surprisingly, his students, upon leaving the Academy, began to teach doctrines which contradicted the accepted doctrines of the Reformed Churches. The Holland Churches began to take note of these troubling events and their delegates thought it necessary to bring these matters to the attention of the next Synod. Therefore, the Deputies of the North and South Holland Churches “confronted” Arminius concerning rumors surrounding him (*V.O.O.F.*, p. 50). Arminius refused to cooperate with them as long as they remained in their capacity as Deputies. He said he would confer with them

as preachers as long as they wouldn’t report to Synod. This the Deputies knew to be improper.

On July 26, 1604, Arminius was instructed by two elders of his church (Leiden) to have a conference with his fellow professors in the presence of the consistory in order to make known what he might have against Reformed doctrine. Again, Arminius refused, claiming the Curators of the Academy would have to approve and that he did not see the benefit of this kind of meeting.

This matter soon made it to the Synod of the South Holland churches by way of a protest from the Classis of Dordrecht. They heard also from the Deputies concerning the situation at Leiden. The Synod instructed the Deputies to “charge” the Curators that all the professors openly declare what they believed concerning the doctrines at issue (*V.O.O.F.*, p. 51). This the Curators refused, saying that it would be better if a National Synod investigated the matter, which they said would soon be called.

The churches, seeing that the matter was not resolved and getting worse, petitioned the States-General to convene a National Synod, which for so many years had been delayed. The States-General declared that all of the States of the Provinces agreed, but some added the condition that at the Synod, the Confession and the Catechism must be revised. The Deputies, knowing that it was the Arminian party who had inserted this condition, requested that the Synod be authorized in general terms and not as if the States and Churches had doubts about these creeds.

Later, the States-General desired that “learned and peaceable Theologians” from every Province get together to discuss the “time, place, and manner of holding the National Synod” (*V.O.O.F.*, p. 53). In anticipation of this meeting, the Deputies of the Synod of the Churches of Holland were instructed by the Synod to work to get removed the clause concerning the revision of the Confession and Catechism and to replace it with “softer” words (*V.O.O.F.*, p. 54).

Further, this Synod also demanded of all the South Holland ministers and professors at Leiden to declare any “suspicions and their insights against the doctrine contained in the Confession and the Catechism” (*V.O.O.F.*, p. 54). The ministers were to answer to the Classis, the professors to the Deputies, and the Classis would bring the objections to the National Synod.

When this demand was put before the ministers who sided with Arminius, they refused, saying they would do so at the right place and time. Arminius also refused

the Deputies. He said that he could not now do it “in an edifying manner,” but would reveal his objections at a National Synod (*V.O.O.F.*, p. 54).

From this chain of events which took place while Arminius yet lived, it is plain to see the difficult situation developing in the churches. Arminius and those who sided with him craftily pushed their agenda forward and the churches became more and more disturbed. We can learn from this history the tactics that the enemies of the truth use against the church.

First of all, those men knew that they could do much to damage the truth if they could infiltrate the seminaries. Once professors, they could spread their lies on a mass scale. Many young men would leave the theological schools infected with the lie which they passed on in their preaching as time passed. Arminius himself infected many young men with his errors.

Secondly, those enemies of the truth attempted to discredit the creeds of the Reformed Churches of the time, the Catechism and the Confession. No doubt their intent was to create doubt in the minds of the people concerning the doctrines which the Spirit of Truth had led the churches to develop in times of controversy. Having done this, they could then proceed to slowly lead the church away from Christ and more towards man.

Thirdly, those men did everything in their power to short-circuit the proper ecclesiastical operations of the churches. While they claimed to desire a National Synod, they worked deceitfully to avoid one. Whenever they were called upon by synodical deputies to clearly state what they believed, they would always have an excuse why they could not answer. Whenever they knew that any kind of ecclesiastical decision upon their errors was imminent, they would do everything in their power, including appealing to the state, to postpone that action.

These were some of the tactics which the Arminian party used in their disturbing of the churches. Next time, Lord willing, we will look at more of the events leading up to the Synod of Dordt, as well as noticing more of the tactics that the Remonstrants used in their attempt to destroy the Reformed faith. ❖

*Much of the information in this article has been taken from the book *The Voice of Our Fathers, An Exposition of the Canons of Dordrecht*, by Homer Hoeksema. Reformed Free Publishing Association, Grand Rapids, Michigan. Copyright 1980.*

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

Church History

George M. Ophoff (7)

High School and College

by Prof. Herman Hanko

At the time George Ophoff graduated from grade school, no Christian high school existed in the city. Calvin College, however, included in its curriculum various high school subjects. The reason for this set-up was that the State did not yet require all children to attend school until 16 years of age, and it was thought unnecessary to have a general high school education unless one intended to become either a minister or a teacher in the Christian schools. The high school subjects, therefore, which were included in the curriculum

of Calvin were such subjects as a prospective teacher or minister would take.

Calvin College was located at this time on the corner of Franklin Street and Madison Avenue in the southeast part of Grand Rapids. The old building stood on the northwest corner of the intersection, across Madison Ave from where Grand Rapids Christian High School later stood. The high school buildings have since become city government buildings and the Christian High School located there merged with East Christian High on Plymouth near Alger.

George Ophoff enrolled in the high school curriculum with a view to becoming a minister of the gospel. Little is known of how the Lord impressed the desire to become a minister of George's soul. But the call was unmistakable, for there were many interruptions of his schooling, and, from a purely earthly point of view, George could have concluded that God was raising obstacles in his chosen course of study to direct him into vocation other than the ministry.

George's high school education went fairly well, and he graduated in 1909 at the age of 18. It seems that he was, on the whole, a good student and applied himself with some diligence to his studies. But when his high school years were completed, his studies were interrupted, probably due to a lack of finances in the family. The family had grown and brothers and sisters were in grade school. Because the money available for tuition and the needs of the family was severely limited, George had to find work to help support the family.

He found such work in Consumers Ice Company. In the days prior to a general availability of electricity and refrigeration, ice was big business. Huge cakes of ice had been cut during the winter from the Grand River and stored in insulated sheds for summer use. But in some ice plants electricity was already available and ice manufacturing was becoming increasingly big business. Consumers Ice Company later became one of the largest ice companies in the city and only discontinued its services when refrigeration became common.

In my own college days, I worked for an ice company. The ice was made by submerging large cans filled with water into brine that was cooled to far below freezing by huge pumps which pumped ammonia through the brine. When, after a couple of days, the water in the cans had frozen, the cans had to be lifted out of the brine, dunked in water to free the ice from the sides of the can, and then tipped so that a 300 lb. block of ice could be transferred into the ice house where the ice was stored. Ammonia was almost always leaking from the plumbing; the work was difficult and heavy; and the temperature in the ice storage room was zero or below. All day long we went from the ice storage area to the ice-manufacturing area and to the dock (where in the summer the temperatures could reach 100 degrees) on which the ice was cut up to be sold to customers, or ground up and blown into trucks which carried produce to different parts of the country. Precisely how the ice was manufactured by Consumers Ice Company when George worked there

we do not know. But it was work quite different from studying in Calvin.

About two years, from 1909 to 1911, George worked in the ice company. The Lord made it possible after two years for George to return to his studies, and he began the normal four year course in Calvin College which served as preparation for Seminary studies.

If those days were anything like my own time in Calvin, the curriculum was demanding for a pre-sem student. Much emphasis was placed on languages. Two years of Dutch were required—although George may have known Dutch well before entering college, for Dutch was still commonly spoken among the people, and it was the language used in the pulpit, the Catechism classes and the Christian schools. Three years of Greek were required: one year of classical Greek grammar, one year of classical Greek reading, and one year of New Testament Greek reading. Latin was required, two full years of it during which classical Latin was read as well as the Latin of the early church fathers.

In addition to languages, a liberal arts education was required, which included two years of philosophy, one year of psychology, and studies in economics, education, literature, sociology and natural science. It was a rigorous schedule designed to produce well-rounded men who were able to assume the responsibilities of a congregation and be able to defend the Reformed faith against attacks from every side.

It is quite likely that the college George attended was genuinely Reformed in most areas, and the education he received was the best from a Reformed perspective available in the country. I look back on my college years, even though the college had lost some of its Re-



Rev. Ophoff's boyhood home as it looks today.

formed character, as good years, necessary years, years which went far to equip us for Seminary studies and the ministry of the gospel.

Nevertheless, already the common grace controversy was brewing. Immigrants from the Netherlands who had come under the influence of Dr. Abraham Kuyper and who had imbibed his teachings on common grace, had not only entered the Christian Reformed Church, but had found positions in Calvin College. Discussions of this subject must have taken place frequently in class.

After graduating from college, George's studies were once again interrupted; and once again he went to work for Consumers Ice Company. This hiatus in his studies also lasted about two years. The reason for the interruption is not known, but finances could very well have forced George back into secular work for a time. It seems, however, that his commitment to the ministry never disappeared, even though he must have wondered at times at the ways of God; he returned to his studies as soon as he was able.

During the interval between college and seminary studies two events took place which had a profound effect upon the life and future studies of George Ophoff.

The old Professor Hemkes, now a widower and the story of whose life we discussed earlier, lived alone on the corner of Henry Ave. and Bates St. on the southeast end of town, near Bates Street Christian Reformed Church. Prof. Hemkes had served with distinction as minister of the gospel and professor in Calvin Seminary, but had since retired. In 1916, when George was 25 years old, Prof. Hemkes broke his hip in a fall. This is always a serious matter with older people, but in those days it was even more serious, for modern advances in bone surgery were unknown. Prof. Hemkes never walked again.

Someone had to take care of him, and the lot fell on George. There were probably two reasons for this. One reason was that George was the oldest in his family and the care of an invalid grandfather would quite naturally fall on the oldest. Another reason was that George wanted very much to continue his studies, and in the quietness of his grandfather's home he could find the peace and time for study which had been difficult in the hustle and bustle of his own family home. George left home to live on the corner of Henry and Bates with his grandfather. He did not return to the home of his parents.

The influence of Prof. Hemkes was great. Not only could George's grandfather give him the encouragement he needed to take up and persevere in his studies for the ministry, but the aged man, so long busy in the affairs of

the church, could give to the young Seminary student the knowledge of the Reformed faith and the traditions of the churches of the *Afscheiding* which were dear to his heart. It might very well have been that during his stay with his grandfather, George had become somewhat discouraged as he worked for the ice company. This was the second time his studies had been interrupted, and it seems but natural that he would sometimes wonder whether the Lord was actually calling him to the work of the ministry. His grandfather's counsel would have been invaluable as the two of them lived alone.

Although George still worked for a time at a secular job, he soon resumed his studies in the Seminary while, at the same time, he took care of Prof. Hemkes. He entered the Seminary in 1918 at the age of 27. There were many quiet hours in which the two could discuss the faith which they loved. These were good years, in God's providence necessary years, during which George was strengthened and broadened in his knowledge of Scripture and the Reformed faith.

Another event took place shortly after George's seminary studies were started. This was a tragedy of major proportions in the Ophoff family.

Frederick Ophoff, George's father, worked at the Rex Reed Furniture Factory in downtown Grand Rapids in the years when Grand Rapids was the furniture capitol of the world. In 1919 a huge explosion tore apart the factory where Frederick worked. The explosion took place while the plant was in operation, but in a part of the shop sufficiently distant from the spot where Frederick worked that he could escape the inferno unharmed. He worked in the painting and varnishing department. After escaping from the building, he remembered a very precious watch which he had laid on the bench on which he worked and, which, in his haste, he had left behind. Calculating that he could enter his department before the flames reached it to save his watch, he plunged back into the building against the advice of the onlookers and fellow workers. He did not succeed. An explosion tore apart that part of the shop he had entered and he was badly burned. He died that same day at the age of 52.

The tragedy for the family was great, for he left a widow and eight children. Their only means of support from that time on was a small pension from the shop which could not possibly be stretched to cover the needs of the family. But the children were growing up and they were able to find work to add to the family income, and God cared for them as He promised to care for the poor, and especially the widows.

But now the family was also deeply involved in George's studies and wholly behind him in his goal of the ministry. His studies were not interrupted; his stay with his grandfather continued; and George was not expected to contribute to the family support.

Having known Rev. Ophoff personally and having studied under him, it seems to me in retrospect that, while Rev. Ophoff never mentioned this tragedy in class (and I did not learn of it until I was doing research on Rev. Ophoff's life), that this death of his father was the occasion for George to experience personally the sufferings

of God's people and learn to explain them in the light of God's Word. It seemed to me in the years when he was my professor that he had an uncanny knowledge of and sympathy for those in suffering which he may very well have learned when God took away his father and left his family destitute. God uses all our experiences to prepare us for our calling in His kingdom. ❖

Prof. Hanko is a professor emeritus of the Protestant Reformed Seminary.

Gems of the Month

My Mother

*My mother is kind,
And loving in every way,
My mother is there,
To listen to what we say.*

*My mother hurries about,
Doing what we ask,
My mother listens to our needs,
And hastens to do every task.*

*But sometimes we do not listen,
To what she has to say,
She is only trying,
To lead us in God's way.*

*We thank Thee, Lord for mothers,
Christians, who tell us what is right,
Who tell us we must love Thee,
To love thee with all our might.*

by Shauna Schut
(written 1997, age 12)

Mother's Day

*Why do you honor Mom today?
Because she gave you birth,
Because she fed and clothed you,
Does that comprise her worth?*

*Your Heavenly Father chose her
To fill this special place,
That you might be instructed
In His ways and by His grace.*

*Her labors are not easy,
Her griefs, oft hard to bear,
Yet strengthened in her duty
She continues in her care.*

*Do not begrudge, but thank her
For correction that she gave,
For God so uses mothers
That their children He may save.*

*Yes, show your mother honor
Rise up and call her blest;
For she's the instrument God gave
That He might be confessed.*

by Thelma Westra

2003 Protestant Reformed Young People's Convention

Date: August 14-19, 2003

Location: Estes Park, Colorado

Host: Loveland Protestant Reformed Church

Theme: "Surrounded by God"

Theme Text: Psalm 125: 1 & 2

Theme Song: Psalter #354

Speakers:

Prof. Russell Dykstra "God is Our Protector"

Rev. Doug Kuiper "The Character and Responsibility of God's People"

Rev. Ron Hanko "The Preservation of God's People"

We are now accepting applications
for those interested in chaperoning.

Look for more information
regarding this years convention at
www.prca.org

"LITTLE LIGHTS"

... let it shine!

by Connie Meyer

The Cannon of Canons

Henry saw the open Psalter on the desk. It was open to a section in the back. "Hm. C-A-N-O-N-S. Canons?"

Henry's father walked into the room and picked up the Psalter, starting to read where he had left off.

"Hey, Dad, what's the Canons?" Henry asked. "Are those the big guns that go *BOOM*?"

His father smiled. "No, that cannon is spelled a little differently. But these canons are just as important for our defense—our defense of the truth of God's Word." He flipped through the pages with Henry. "There's a First Head, a Second, a Third and Fourth, and a Fifth. Each section was written to defend different parts of the doctrine that we hold dear."

"When was it written?"

"In 1618 to 1619. That was almost 400 years ago! But it was only 100 years after the Reformation, and already wolves were coming into the church and doing great damage to the truth—and to the sheep. But God is faithful. He guided men of His truth to see that truth more clearly, and to defend it over against the lie. So now this defense is written down for all of us."

"Why are you studying it, Dad?"

"Because the same lies are out there today. And because as God continues to guide us into His truth, we have to know the truth and creeds that have already been set down. He will keep leading us on the same path—not on a different one." He paused. "Do you want to defend the truth of Scripture?"

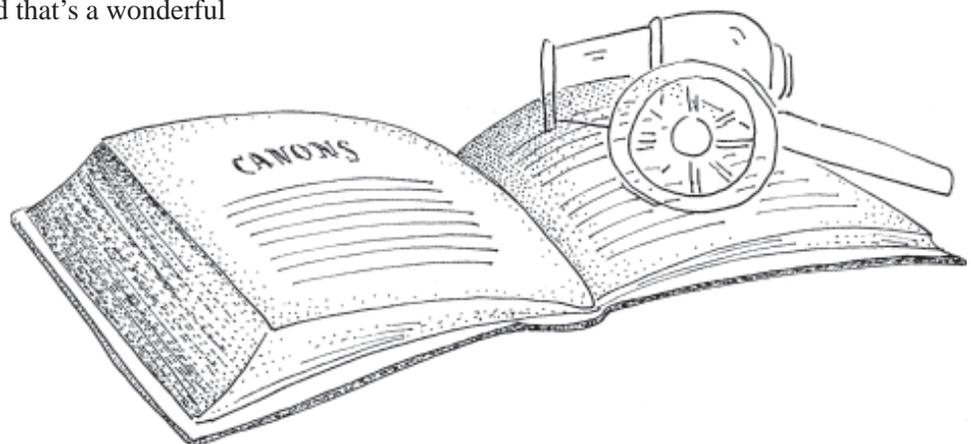
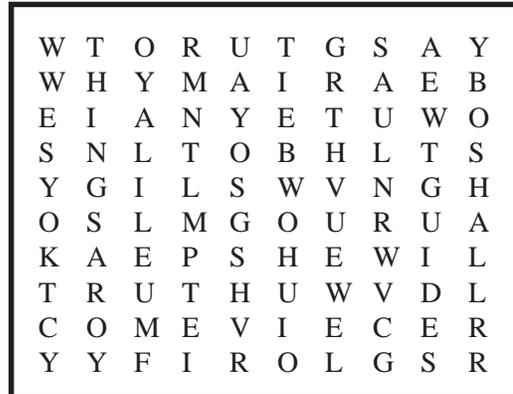
Henry nodded. He knew he loved the Word of God. He knew that some day he wanted to know and understand the Canons more, too.

"In the defense of the truth we see the truth even more clearly," his father added, "and that's a wonderful thing!" ❖

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

Find these underlined words from John 16:12-14 in the puzzle below:

"I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you."



BEACONLIGHTS

P.O. BOX 144
Randolph, WI 53956

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

Church News

BAPTISMS

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

Mark 16:16

The sacrament of Holy Baptism was administered to:

David Michael, son of Mr. & Mrs. Matthew DeJong—Doon, IA
Jack Lewis, son of Mr. & Mrs. Daniel van den Berg—Edmonton, Alberta
Luke Titus, son of Mr. & Mrs. Eric VanDyke—Faith, MI
Trevor Lee, son of Mr. & Mrs. Jared Kooienga—Faith, MI
Brett Jordan, son of Mr. & Mrs. Steve Lotterman—Grace, MI
Cody Evan, son of Mr. & Mrs. Daryl Koole—Grace, MI
Denise Ann, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Nick Kleyn—Grace, MI
Rachel Cristine, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. David Langerak—Hope, MI
Alyssa Ranae, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Carl Maassen—Hull, IA
Kaleb Edward, son of Mr. & Mrs. Brian VanMaanan—Hull, IA
Levi Thomas, son of Mr. & Mrs. Jim Wierenga—Lacombe, Canada
Logan Jacob, son of Mr. & Mrs. James Kooiker—Randolph, WI
Victoria Marie, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Marlin Feenstra—Redlands, CA
Cynthia Dawn, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Steve Kuiper—Southwest, MI

CONFESSIONS OF FAITH

"...and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

Romans 10:10

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

Danae Kooinga—Byron Center, MI
Debbie Slopsema—Frist, GR
Christine Young—First, GR
Jason Bertsch—Grace, MI
Tim Kleyn—Grace, MI
Amy DeVries—Grandville, MI
Rebecca Joostens—Grandville, MI
Deborah Key—Grandville, MI
Lynne Kooiman—Grandville, MI
Justin Kamps—Grandville, MI
Jonathan Key—Grandville, MI
Randall Veldman—Grandville, MI
Derek Cnossen—Hudsonville, MI
Alisha Dykstra—Hudsonville, MI
Jordan Dykstra—Hudsonville, MI
Eric Gritters—Hudsonville, MI
Ross Zuverink—Hudsonville, MI
Janae VanMaanen—Hull, IA
Janelle Bruinsma—Peace, IL
Laurie Kooy—Peace, IL
Meghan Looyenga—Peace, IL
Leanne Cammenga—Southwest, MI
Dan Butler—Southwest, MI

MARRIAGES

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

Matthew 19:5

United in the bond of Holy Matrimony were:

Mr. Steven Reyenga and Miss Suzanne DeJong—Bethel, IL
Mr. Chad Mingerink and Miss Katie VanOverloop—Byron Center, MI
Mr. Aaron Regnerus and Miss Bobby Witvoet—South Holland, IL

Attention Prospective Teachers or Ministers:

The Protestant Reformed Scholarship Committee is now receiving requests for application packets for scholarship opportunity. Please email the scholarship secretary, Brenda De Jong, at brendadj@juno.com or call at 616-662-2187 to obtain a packet. All packet requests must be received by May 17, 2003, and completed packets must be postmarked by June 7, 2003 to be considered eligible for monies.