

Beacon Lights

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"For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."

1 Timothy 6:10

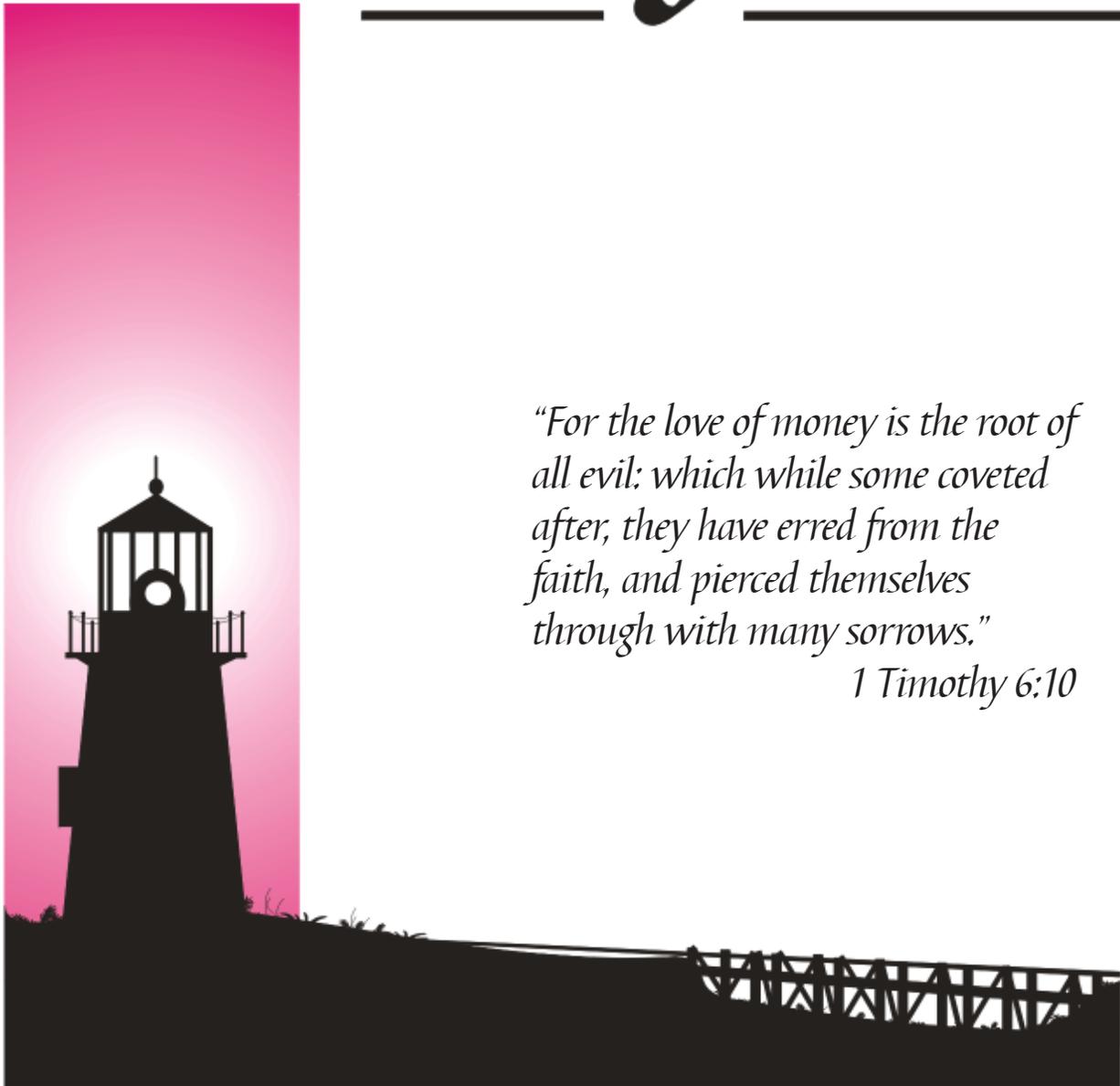


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Satan's Meeting

by John Huizenga



You may have read *The Screwtape Letters* by C. S. Lewis. In an attempt to make us more aware of the nature of the temptations we face every day, C. S. Lewis writes an imaginary series of letters between a fledgling demon who is learning the art of deception and his demon uncle who is giving the instruction. One of the benefits of reading these letters is that they open our eyes to things that we do not even recognize as a work of the devil.

While thinking about how to approach the topic I had in mind for an editorial, a dear niece forwarded a little piece that addressed the topic in a style similar to C. S. Lewis'. It said what I wanted to say, so I am going to borrow some of the ideas.

Satan called a worldwide convention of demons. In his opening address he said, "We can't keep Christians from going to church. We can't keep them from reading their Bibles and knowing the truth. Many of them don't read much anymore anyway, but somehow they manage to hobble their way through life and God receives them to glory. Our power over them is broken once God puts within them the new heart of flesh. The new heart seeks out every opportunity to grow in covenant fellowship with God. It is impossible to change that heart and it would appear that after some six thousand years of work that it is impossible to smother that heart with the old sinful nature even if we do succeed in making their life miserable.

"But do not despair! Don't ever give up! Keep up every last trick we have developed so far. Now it is time to introduce the straw that will break the church's back. I have often noticed that the new heart thrives by having time with God. Without time, I am sure it will die or at least grow so weak that it will faint under all the other pressures. We must take away their time, and there is no better time in all of history to do it. Never before have there been so many ways to get their attention and use of their time with worthless activity."

"How shall we do this!" his demons shouted.

"Keep them busy with things that are not essential for spiritual growth and invent innumerable schemes to occupy their minds," he answered. "Tempt them to spend, spend, spend, and borrow, borrow, borrow. Convince them that wants are needs and multiply the things for them to want. Persuade the husbands that good work ethics have more to do with spending six 11-hour days than putting in a solid eight hours of honest work. You can even begin working on the very young children by starving them of time under the godly instruction of their own mothers. Persuade the wives to leave their homes and children in order to make the extra money they need to pay back the credit card bills. The standard 'three pronged' approach works just as well here as it always has. Don't rely simply on the 'money' argument; make sure they feel a deep desire to get away from the children and make sure they are praised and admired for leaving the home for a second income. Convince them that what makes a man or woman of worth is being able to make and spend money. As their families fragment, they will lose the place where much of that spiritual growth time is spent.

"Over-stimulate their minds so they can't hear their conscience. See to it that all stores and restaurants play non-biblical music constantly. Entice them to fill their cars and homes at least with meaningless mind-numbing diddies. If possible, sneak in some sugar coated heresy or blasphemy. Many have already

become numb and insensitive and don't even notice a full dose of straight humanism. Fill coffee tables with magazines and newspapers. Pound their minds with news 24 hours a day. Keep the television on as long as possible. Bombard their driving time with billboards. Flood their mail boxes with junk mail, mail order catalogs, sweepstakes, and every kind of newsletter and promotional offering free products, services and false hopes. By the time they think maybe they should pick up the *Beacon Lights* or *Standard Bearer*, they will be too tired to read much further.

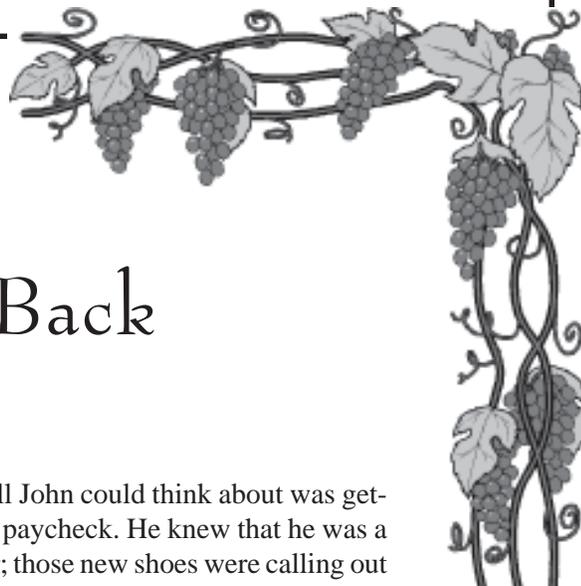
"Even in their recreation, let them be excessive. Make abundant opportunity for the children to be involved in multiple sports after school. Convince them that it is essential for developing self-esteem, good sportsmanship, and lasting friendships. They will quickly forget the essentials for spiritual life. Parents who have already been suckered into thinking they need to work late will love it because it gives them more time before they need to get home. Excessive sports has the added bonus of destroying devotions during supper.

"When they try to find some time away from work, have them return from their recreation exhausted. Keep them too busy and entertainment minded to go out someplace quiet where they can meditate upon the handiwork of God's creation. Send them to amusement parks, sporting events and concerts instead. Keep them busy, busy, busy! Wear them out so that when they gather for worship, their minds are still buzzing and their bodies want to sleep. Let anyone with time to spend in the study of God's word and fellowship together with the family be branded as 'lazy.'

"The best part of this plan to steal their time is that it works beautifully into the overall scheme to make what is good turn into evil. When they gather together for fellowship and time in which they can build each other up spiritually, let their conscience bother them so that they realize that they have fallen far short in spending time with God. They will try to make up for it by becoming involved in good causes. Soon they will crowd their lives with so many good causes that they will have little time for the really important things like spending time with God and their families. Make their fellowship suppers complicated and extravagant so that they begin to bicker and fight about details and forget the real purpose. Their schools and churches all need money, so make the gathering of that money complicated and time consuming as well. If it is allowed to be too simple, it will be very difficult to waste time and stir up some good old fashioned pride. It will work! It will work!"

It was quite a plan. The demons went eagerly to their assignments, causing Christians everywhere to have little time for their God and their families. I guess the question is, has the devil been successful at his scheme? You be the judge. ❖

Fruitful Branches



Giving a Portion Back

by Jason Van Oostenbrugge

John was a Christian young man who had just started his first job. The first week went great and so did the second. Toward the end of the second week of

work, all John could think about was getting his paycheck. He knew that he was a spender; those new shoes were calling out

his name, and that shiny new wakeboard at MC Sports looked very tempting. The following Tuesday, John received his check and tried to decide what he was going to spend it on. John figured he would put thirty dollars in the bank and spend the rest. He had totally forgotten about God, who is the One that had given him everything he had. John did not even give God's church a few dollars. Many young people fall under the impression that they are only young once and that they need to have fun and spend their money; but this is not being a good steward with money.

Sit back and think about what you have spent in the last few weeks for your own personal benefit.

Sit back and think about what you have spent in the last few weeks for your own personal benefit. You may have bought a hockey stick, shoes, make-up, candy, gas, and the list goes on and on. One thing that many have to deal with is going out to eat. Some people go out to eat once a day, and others go a couple of times a week. This can get expensive and is not the Christian way to use your money.

Picture yourself with your friends on a Friday night. You go to Red Lobster, and then to Strikers for some mini-golf. You spent anywhere from fifteen to twenty-five dollars. Then Sunday rolls around, and you put a dollar or two in the collection plate. Is that being a good steward of your money?

Some young people have a lot of bills and expenses that they must pay. They have to pay for tuition, a car, insurance, books, and still need some money to spend and put in the collection plate. This is a tough situation to be in. In this situation the question to ask yourself is, what are your priorities, and who gave you all that you have? A Christian's priority should be the church and schools that we attend. Giving starts with God—then yourself if there is any left over.

Whether one dollar or one hundred dollars, we are to give all we can to the benefit of God's kingdom. In Mark 12:41 and following, we read of the poor widow who gives two mites to the church. The disciples and others around did not think that the widow gave very

much to the church. Then Jesus tells his disciples, "That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living." This widow gave all that she owned, and we often find it hard to give up even a few dollars.

For some it is best to set a specific amount to give. Doing this will prepare them for later life when they are required to give, and it will keep them from becoming lazy in their giving. The Old Testament gives a good guideline for our giving. In Leviticus 27:30-32, it teaches that everything is the Lord's, and we are to give a tenth part of all we receive. As Christians we are to "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's," (Matthew 22:21). A tenth of all that we earn is not very much at all. If you make one hundred dollars, giving ten dollars in the church collection plate will not hurt.

We are not to be as John and spend our paycheck mostly on ourselves. Spending some of it once in a while is not bad; it is spending in excess that is not right. As Christian young people we are to remember that God has given us everything that we possess, even His own Son. We are to live knowing that God has given us everything we need and being good stewards of what God has given to us. ❖

Jason is a member of Grace Protestant Reformed Church in Standale, Michigan. He wrote this article for senior writing at Covenant Christian High School.

"Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it."

Malachi 3:10

Overflowing the Well

(The talents of the Kalamazoo Protestant Reformed Church)

by Mandy Bruinsma

*One walks in the room and what do they see?
Ordinary people, You and Me.
But take a moment and really look,
And you'll see more than could fit in a book.*

*Faces with stories, hundreds to tell.
People with talents overflowing the well.
They all have a purpose in this world to fulfill.
People in **my** church doing God's will.*

*On the Bishop family we all lean,
For every Sunday our church is clean.
Three beautiful daughters and loving parents too,
Brad and Trisha's family in the covenant continue.*

*For six and a half years we've been welcome here.
The Bruinsma family gives thanks sincere.
Bertha Dusseljee makes up a large part.
Through her life God was always in her heart.*

*If ever you're bored, with no place to go,
Call Feenstra's, you'll have a good time, I know.
Millie we all hold dear to our souls,
With her positive humor she brings joy to the fold.*

*The Daniel Kiel family is always sharing,
Even now for Deb's parents, they are caring.
Henry and Murial make us all proud,
With their children of the covenant standing round.*

*Sandy Kiel is a good friend to all.
Our "church aunt" is what she is called.
When sick, the Tom Kiel family expect.
A needy heart they can always detect.*

*George Moerman makes us wait and pray,
For the kingdom that waits us comes closer each day.
When you're in a pinch with no time to spare,
Larry and Sandy with loving help will be there.*

*Bob and Judy have a special gift,
Their kindness makes our spirits lift.
Communion of saints is always a need,
One that Alice Nederhood is sure to feed.*

*Kevin Philips is the new face we see.
New growth—which is always exciting to me!
Gwen beautifully plays the organ while Dave collects funds,
These gifts are what makes the church run.*

*Berdena, to the church how faithful are you,
A God-fearing member your whole life through.
Steenholdts are valued for more than we know,
On many books and pamphlets his handiwork will show.*

*Elaine is always close at heart,
Writing letters and recipes to perform her part.
Jon and Janis are newlyweds you know,
Reminding us why we love marriage so.*

*VanDyks shine forth God's love in their lives,
For to reach the mark they always strive.
Nate and Tracy with two sons of their own,
Working to build a covenant home.*

*Verbeeks are ready with a card or a prayer,
Always remembering to see how we fair.
When picking up a bulletin each week
To the Wheelers your thanks you should speak.*

*Our talents are more than my words could say.
This is why I am thankful each day.
God has given me a chance to see
How wonderful communion of saints can be.*

*When I walk in this room, what do I see?
Not ordinary people, How could that be?
I see God's love shining ever so bright
In each and every face in this room tonight.*

The Holy Spirit Proceeding from both the Father and the Son

by Rev. James Laning

The Reader Asks

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:

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

Question of Matthew Overway

I am Matthew Overway and am a member of First Protestant Reformed Church of Holland, Michigan. I have a question for you I hope you can answer in your section of the *Beacon Lights* (The Reader Asks) concerning the Trinity. After reading the Nicene Creed and the Triple Knowledge on Lord's Day VIII, I was struck by the fact that the Holy Spirit proceeds out of the Father and the Son. This doctrine was not new to me, but I had never wondered what it meant. Now after reading these two expositions of scripture on this doctrine I ask you to help me (and fellow readers) understand what it means that the Holy Spirit proceeds out of the Father and the Son. Also, I ask if you could help explain the importance of this specific doctrine to the general doctrine of the Trinity.

And finally could you cite some scriptural passages that support this doctrine or at least make it clearer.

Dear Matthew,

It is a delight to read of your desire to understand this profound truth concerning the life of the Triune God. Admittedly, it is a truth that is beyond our full comprehension. But, nevertheless, since God has revealed this truth to us, it is something we believers can begin to understand.

We begin by quoting a passage where we read of this. John 15:26 says,

But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:

The word translated "proceedeth" literally means "goes out from." Here we read that the Holy Spirit goes out from the Father, and is sent by the Son. But if He is sent by the Son, then He goes out from the Son. Thus this passage has been one of the main ones used to support the teaching that the Spirit proceeds not only from the Father, but also from the Son.

There are, however, other passages that describe this eternal activity within the Being of God. Another way of saying that the Spirit *proceeds* is to say that He is *breathed forth*. The word translated "Spirit" is a word that also means "Breath." Therefore, it is proper to say that the Holy Spirit is the Breath of God, and that He is breathed forth from both the Father and the Son. We read of this in John 20:22: "And when he (i.e. Jesus) had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost."

The second Person of the Trinity is the Word of God (John 1:1, 14), and the third Person of the Trinity is the Breath of God. We read of both of them in Psalm 33:6, "By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth."

When we speak a word, out from our mouth comes both the word and our breath. But the Word of God and the Breath of God are two real, distinct Persons, different from the Father and from one another. This tells us

something about how intimate the communion is within the triune Being of God. We cannot fully comprehend this, but we know from Scripture that it is so.

It is very important that we understand that the Spirit proceeds not only from the Father, but also from the Son. There was a controversy over this issue that led to the split of the eastern churches from the western churches in the year 1054. We can see more clearly why an understanding of this truth is so important when we remember

that the second Person is the Word of God. If the Spirit is breathed forth from the Word of God, then we will experience the blessings of the Holy Spirit only when we are listening to and embracing the truth of the Word of God.

This is a very glorious and fascinating truth. If you have any other questions regarding this or anything else, please write again. ❖

Consider the Creation

On Eagle's Wings

by Deane Wassink

I can still see him clearly in my mind's eye. A sudden flash of brilliant white from tail and head as the bald eagle changed from a black silhouette far off in the sky to when it flared to perch on the top of a dead and broken cedar. We were in a rowboat about fifty yards away. As we quietly worked our way closer, it reacted by flying right over our heads. Its great wings carried it across the small lake. Its head and tail were in bright contrast to its black body. It flared, talons extended, as if to grab prey. Instead, it swept upward to land in another dead tree with a proper vantage point. Later, at a different location, we watched a youngster fly over our heads and land out of sight. For several minutes we could hear it's angry shrieks telling us we were too close.

The eagle is back in Michigan. Nearly every year we have reports of eagle sightings along the shore of Lake Michigan. In the past, the population was decimated by pollution from industry and farming. Now its numbers are on the rise. In fact, this past winter, there were over forty eagles flying around the harbor in Grand Haven. They were drawn there because the open water enabled them to fish.

The eagles are one of the largest birds of prey in the United States. They weigh from eight to thirteen pounds as adults with a wingspan of seven feet. They have extremely keen vision. Their beaks are over two inches long and an inch deep. The bald eagle is primarily a fish and carrion eater. The golden eagle, on the other hand feeds on small mammals. They have incredible power

in their flight. In fact, with the right wind, they can lift prey of their own weight and fly off with it. You know how hard it is to lift someone off the ground that is your same weight. Now imagine flying off with it. What an incredible feat! It is their tremendous untamed power and fierceness that have captured man's imagination.

I actually had the opportunity to hold an eagle on my leather-gloved arm at a friend's house in Northern Ireland. He raises and trains over thirty raptors of many different kinds, including hawks, falcons, owls and a vulture. He hunts with them and teaches children about their amazing characteristics. After flying and training one of his hawks with me, he allowed me to hold a small eagle he was working with. This one had a wingspan of about six feet. When it beat its wings, it pulled up my arm with its power. What a tremendous thrill to feel those huge razor sharp talons grip my arm and stare into those fierce wild eyes. I'll never forget the amazing experience.

It is the power of this beautiful bird of prey that makes it such a fitting example in the Bible both of God's power and fierce anger against sin, but also of the Christian's spiritual power in the midst of sin and trial. Agur, in Proverbs 30:19 declares the flight of the eagle to be one of the four most wonderful things he has observed. The image of the eagles powerful flight is emphasized by Isaiah in chapter 40, verse 31: "But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles...." When we feel

faint and weary, burdened by the weight of sin and trials that we are dealing with, we must look to the eagle and soar like him with our burdens into the heavens. There, God will give us strength to trust in Him and walk in His power. Don't be grounded and miserable in unbelief. By faith, we have the spiritual power to soar above all our earthly weaknesses. May God give us that faith.

On Eagles Wings

*On eagles wings,
Will I mount up.
Salvation He brings.
He will fill my cup.*

*Apart from Him,
I cannot fly.
Burdened by sin,
To Him I cry.*

*My heart filled with pain.
Headed for destruction,
Others help I disdain.
My pain is my instruction.*

*From the depths of despair,
On wings I'm raised.
I know His care.
With power I'm saved.*

*On eagles wings,
Will I mount up.
Before Him I stand,
Upheld by His hand. ❖*

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

Pastor Profile

Rev. Wayne Bekkering

by Rev. Wayne Bekkering

I was born in 1942 in Wyoming, Michigan. My parents are George Bekkering and Julia Woodruff. My parents are divorced and are both remarried. I lived in Byron Center, Michigan until I was eight years old at which time my family moved to Howard City, Michigan, where I lived for the next ten years. During the time we lived in Howard City we went to a Methodist Church, where the teaching and preaching were very weak and without the gospel in any clear or distinctive way. In God's providence, the Christian Reformed Church in Grant, Michigan had a Sunday afternoon Mission Sunday



School to which my parents sent me and my three brothers. God used that Sunday School to supplement our lack of solid Biblical instruction.

I started school at Byron Center Public and when my family moved to Howard City I went to Howard City Public for the next ten years. When I was a senior in high school my parents divorced and my mother moved back to Byron Center along with me and my three brothers. For my last semester of high school I attended Byron Center Public and graduated in 1961.

When I finished high school I did not intend to go to college. For the next three years I worked on a printing press in a factory. In that factory there was a black man who had attended Grand Rapids Junior College and he urged me to go there. God used that man's urging to set me in a new direction. In 1964, I began to attend Grand Rapids Junior College, which is now called Grand Rapids Community College, and I completed two years of study there.

After I started college, I got a part time job in a grocery store. In that store worked two people who would in God's providence have an important part in my future. The first was a man name Arie Griffioen, who has died in the past few years, but his widow is a member of our Southwest Protestant Reformed Church. I worked closely with Arie for about two years and he taught me the beginning principles of the Reformed faith, especially the sovereignty of God. He introduced me to the PRCs even though at that time he was a member of the CRC. A few years later we both became members of the PRC. God used Arie's day by day informal instruction for my spiritual upbuilding and for an increased involvement in my church. During that time, I began to teach Sunday School at the Reformed Church in Byron Center.

One day, Arie spoke to me privately and asked me if I had ever considered the ministry of the gospel. My answer was that I never had considered it. He asked me to give it some thought, because he thought that he saw some gifts in me. From that day on I could not get rid of the idea of the ministry as God used that to plant in me the desire to begin pre-seminary study.

At that grocery store where I worked there was another person who would become very important to me. Her name was Phyllis Boer. After we had worked at the same store for about a year, I asked her for a date and she accepted. On our first date we talked about the PRCs. At that time, Phyllis was a member of the CRC, but she had a married sister (Myra Kamps) who was a member of the Hudsonville PRC. Phyllis had spent many hours talking with John and Myra about Bible doctrine and the differences between the CRC and the PRCs. In August of 1966 we were married in Beverly CRC.

God's gift of my wife has been a great blessing to me along with God's gift of nine children and ten grandchildren. In the thirty years of my ministry my wife has been a dependable source of help and encouragement for me even though she was often very busy caring for our children. Now as a missionary's wife she has risen to the challenges set before her.

In September of 1966, I began my pre-seminary at Calvin College. For the next two years we were members of the CRC as I studied at Calvin. During that time, erroneous doctrine was taught concerning God's wonderwork of Creation. As I struggled with that erroneous doctrine, I saw that the problem was deeper than just the doctrine of Creation. The root of that error stemmed from a faulty doctrine concerning the Holy Scripture. As I pursued the matter of the doctrine of the Scripture, I soon learned that that faulty doctrine was a direct result of the false doctrine of Common Grace adopted by the CRC in 1924. These studies led my wife and I to see that the CRC was going in a direction that we could not go, so in the spring of 1968 we left the CRC and joined the PRCs.

During my years in seminary there were many memorable events. I think of the first time that we had to give our "practice preaching" sermon before the professors, the other seminarians and a few ministers who visited. The sharp, although necessary, criticism was not soon forgotten. My first sermon in the churches was memorable. I first brought a word of edification in Southeast Church in November of 1970. The most memorable event for me was being examined publicly before the Synod of 1972 and our graduation ceremony in the old First Church in Grand Rapids.

Peer pressure is an ever-present problem especially for Christian Young People. There is good peer pressure and there is bad peer pressure. Good peer pressure can come from godly friends who strive to do what is right and pleasing to God. Bad peer pressure can come from friends who may be members of our churches but who want to be on the cutting edge of worldliness in dress, in music, in language and in movie attendance to name a few areas of peer pressure. As a young person, I was evilly influenced by my own sinful lust and by friends who were not much concerned about obeying God. The sins I committed were a source of much grief to me, and Satan tried to use my sins to shake my assurance of salvation. Resisting peer pressure is part of the good fight of faith to which God calls all of us from the early days of our childhood until our good fight of faith is finished by death.

One of the most rewarding things for me as a minister to witness in the life of our churches is to see our young people confess their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, marry in the Lord and bring forth and rear their covenant children in their homes, in our churches and in our own schools. ❖

Rev. Bekkering is our missionary laboring in Ghana.

JULY 2003

Arminianism (6)

The Synod of Dordrecht, 1618-1619

by Aaron J. Cleveland

Before we move on to the doctrinal issues involved in the Arminian controversy at the time of the Synod of Dordt, there are several matters about the workings of the Synod itself that we must notice. As we stated in the last article, the Synod, after several delays, began with its first session on November 13, 1618.

The churches of the Netherlands were represented by 56 ministers and elders. The professors Gomarus, Polyander, Thysius, Walaeus, and Lubbertus were also delegated. Because of a controversy where he taught, Lubbertus did not appear until the sixty-second session on January 17, 1619. The final count reveals that the Dutch delegation consisted of 37 ministers, 19 elders, and five professors.

In addition to the Dutch delegation, there were also 25 foreign theologians delegated to the Synod. They came from Great Britain, the Palatinate, Hesse, various republics of Switzerland, the city of Geneva, Bremen, Emden, and Nassau-Wetteravia. Delegates from France and Brandenburg were hindered from coming. These foreign delegates played a very important role at the Synod and were not there in a mere advisory role. They took an active part in exposing the Arminian heresy and the development of the truth as it is set forth in the Canons. The fact that there was a large foreign delegation present at the Synod is significant. Writes Prof. Homer Hoeksema about the presence of the foreign delegation:

...the fact that they aided in the composition of the Canons and the condemnation of Arminians and that they finally affixed their signatures to our Canons means that the latter are undeniably Reformed. They are not merely the expression of one branch of the Reformed churches. They cannot be condemned, surely, as the work of a narrow sect, nor even as the work of a national segment of the church. They are the proper expression of the Reformed truth according to the testimony of the whole Reformed church at that time. This was the last time in history that there was such close intercourse and such thorough agreement among churches of Reformed persuasion. We may safely say, therefore, that our Canons, notwithstanding the contempt of many historians, are the ul-

time expression of the Reformed doctrine of sovereign grace and sovereign reprobation. (*The Voice of Our Fathers*, p. 21)

The official language of the Synod was Latin, the language used by the scholars of that time. Latin was the universal language which made communication among all of the Dutch and foreign theologians possible at the Synod. The Canons themselves were written in Latin and soon after translated into Dutch and other languages.

The Arminians were not present at the Synod when the sessions began. They did not appear until December 6, 1618. Before this time, the leaders of the Arminian party had met in Rotterdam to determine their strategy for the Synod. Hoeksema writes that they formed a two part plan. First of all, “they would cling to the illusion that the Synod was really a conference between the opposing parties, at which the political commissioners, aided by the advice of the foreign theologians, would act as arbiters and make the final decision” (*V.O.O.F.*, p. 26). Secondly, “their strategy was, especially with an eye to the foreign delegates, to depict the national delegates as men who maintained horrible, God-dishonoring opinions, and further, as schismatics and as persecutors of the innocent and simple” (*V.O.O.F.*, p. 26). In reference to the second part of the Arminian strategy Prof. Hoeksema keenly observes,

Characteristic is this strategy of all heretics, and especially of those who assail the truth of God’s sovereign predestination. It is nothing new that heretics refused to abide by proper ecclesiastical procedure. *Nor is it an innovation when they attempt to portray those who hold to the truth as terrible men—hard, implacable, and cruel. But notice that in this double strategy the question of the truth is not so much as mentioned.* [emphasis added, AJC] Their purpose was, if at all possible, to avoid the issue of the truth and as long as possible to obstruct the proceedings of Synod (*V.O.O.F.*, p. 26).

The leader of the Remonstrants at the Synod was Simon Episcopius. He was a “witty debater, a congenial controversialist, and a knowledgeable student of the Scriptures, his theology was unscriptural and uncertain”

(Kistemaker 1968, 42). For more than a month the Synod was longsuffering with the Arminians and put up with their evasive and delaying tactics until finally, on January 14, 1619, President Bogerman thunderously dismissed them. The words of his dismissal are worth remembering.

You boast that many foreign divines did not refuse to grant your request. Their moderation arose from a misunderstanding. They now declare that they were deceived by you. They say that you are no longer worthy of being heard by the synod. You may pretend what you please, but the great point of your obstinacy is that you regard the synod as a party in the case. Thus you have long delayed us. You have been treated with all gentleness, friendliness, toleration, patience, and simplicity. Go as you came. You began with lies and you end with them. You are full of fraud and double-dealing. You are not worthy that the synod should treat with you further. Depart! Leave! You began with a lie, with a lie you ended! Go! (Kistemaker 1968, 40).

After the Arminians left, never to return, the Synod could get to the work at hand. While the Arminians were no longer personally represented at the Synod, they could be judged by their writings. The Synod divided itself into several advisory committees, with each committee responsible for giving a written opinion concerning each of the Five Articles of the Remonstrants. The Arminians were allowed by the Commissioners to further defend and explain their views to Synod by way of writing. The Arminians wrote much. “In all, their defense of the first article comprised more than two hundred pages” (*V.O.O.F.*, p. 28).

By March 22, all of the writings and opinions had been heard and considered by the delegates. On April 16, “a committee consisting of the president, the two assessors, three foreign delegates, and three national delegates” presented to Synod “its formulation of the first two Canons, which included in each case a Rejection of Errors” (*V.O.O.F.*, p. 29). On that day the first two chapters were approved by the Synod. On April 18, Canons III, IV, and V were adopted. The Synod continued to meet until May 9 when its work was complete.

The Canons of Dordrecht are the precious fruit of the labors of the Synod. While the Heidelberg Catechism and the Belgic Confession were written in the infancy of the Reformation and with the errors of Rome in view, the third of our Three Forms of Unity was the expression of the mature Reformed church in response to the Arminian heresy which threatened the Reformed church

from within (*V.O.O.F.*, p. 35). The Canons more clearly set forth certain truths which had already been confessed in the Catechism and Confession. However, because of the return in disguise of the old Pelagian error, it was necessary for our fathers to more distinctly define the truth and reject the lie with regards to the doctrines of total depravity, unconditional election, limited atonement, irresistible grace, and perseverance of the saints. It is the matter of the Canon’s explicit rejection of errors which upsets many so-called Reformed today. Ought we to be ashamed of our confession using sharp language to condemn the lie? Is not a positive explanation of the truth enough for the church? The answer of Prof. Hoeksema to those who raise this objection is to the point.

But we need not attempt to excuse the Synod of Dordrecht on this score. For after all, is not a rejection of errors thoroughly Scriptural? Do not the Scriptures repeatedly and emphatically condemn false teachers and their errors? And is it not highly presumptuous, even contradictory of the Word of God, for any man to say then: “Let us be positive; let us not offend people by calling attention to the lie; we should be tolerant and should love one another in spite of our differences?” Are we wiser than God, Who gave us His Word in which He Himself warns against and condemns both the lie and the liar? Shall we let the sheep of Christ go unprotected in a world that is full of false doctrine, and allow them to be ensnared by the wiles of the devil? There is no more certain way to cause the church to depart from the truth of God’s Word than not to teach that church to be on guard against false doctrine. And underlying all this is the principle that the truth is antithetical in its very nature. To say Yes to the truth implies already our No to the lie. And because the lie is in the world, is real, that No must not only be an *implied* one, but an *expressed* one, both on the part of the church and on the part of the individual believer. Not to reject all heresies repugnant to the truth is certainly a dereliction of duty (*V.O.O.F.*, p. 38).

With that answer we end, with the intention in the next articles, Lord willing, to begin examining the doctrinal issues involved in the Arminian controversy. ❖

Kistemaker, Simon and Peter Y. De Jong, editor. 1968. Crisis In The Reformed Churches, Essays in Commemoration of the Synod of Dort (1618-’19). Grand Rapids: Reformed Fellowship, Inc.

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Watching Daily At My Gates

by Cornelius Jonker

July 1 Read Romans 10:1-11

The theme of this month's devotionals is the confession of our faith. This can take various forms, as we shall see when we examine each day the confessions of various saints in Scripture. It is our desire that the gift of faith be stimulated in those who have publicly made profession before the church, and also encourage those who are of age and have not done so, to seriously consider this sacred privilege and duty. It is a privilege to become a member of the church by baptism into the covenant and it is a sacred and happy duty to announce to the church that you possess that faith in common with all the members of the body of Christ. By this sincere profession, one receives all the benefits of being a member, not only in the preaching of the Word, but also being a participant in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. In doing so, God is praised and His people are blessed. Sing Psalter 88:1-3.

July 2 Read Ruth 1:11-17

Such a beautiful and sincere confession of her faith by Ruth the Moabitess, the likes of which is seldom heard, is our topic for today. We are all familiar with the story of Naomi and Elimelech and their two sons who left Judah because of a famine and went to Moab. Leaving the true worship of Jehovah had serious consequences for this family. God chastised them with the death of the three men. By God's grace Naomi began her journey back to Judah. One of her daughters-in-law stayed in Moab, but Ruth, despite Naomi's urging to do the same, responded with the well-known and beloved words, "Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God." How wonderful are the works of God to show that despite a willful and costly excursion into Moab, one of His chosen children is brought to the faith, declares a beautiful confession, and becomes a mother of Christ in the royal line. Dear reader, is that God your God, and His people your people? God grant it! Sing Psalter 112:1, 2 and 4.

July 3 Read John 20:24-29

Thomas witnessed the crucifixion of Jesus on that dark Friday afternoon and with hopelessness flooding his heart, went home. How could such a terrible thing as this occur? He was not present when the women first reported the news of Jesus' resurrection to His disciples, or when Jesus appeared in person to them. This was not by accident, but by

sovereign design. Thomas would not believe this wonder unless he could see and feel for himself some physical evidence. We too, all too easily fall victims to similar doubts and unbelief. For Thomas' sake and ours, Jesus confronted him in mercy with a mild rebuke and said "be not faithless, but believing." Thomas responded in faith. "My Lord and my God." The wicked world demands scientific proof when we uphold the truths of Scripture. But by faith, which is the evidence of things not seen, we embrace the truths of God's word and confess with the church of all ages, "My Lord and my God." Sing Psalter 385:1 and 2.

July 4 Read Acts 16:25-34

"Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" This was an agonizing question wrung from the lips of a desperate soul. Many sovereignly directed and miraculous events led to this scene in the prison of Philippi. Of utmost importance is this question, not only for the Philippian jailer, but for you and I as well. Oh, surely, many would say just accept God's gracious offer of salvation freely given to all men. But what does Scripture say? "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." Yes, "believe." But that same Scripture tells us "as many as were ordained to eternal life believed." (Acts 13:48), and that it is the power of God through the Spirit which draws Christ's sheep to salvation. Paul preached the word that night to the jailer and his household and God was pleased to work faith in their hearts through sovereign grace. May we, too, bow before that word and confess that Jesus Christ is our Savior and Lord and have the blessed assurance that we are saved. Sing Psalter 99:4 and 5.

July 5 Read John 6:66-69

Jesus had performed the miracle of feeding the five thousand and the people were convinced that He was the promised Messiah. Jesus knew of course that they were seeking an earthly Messiah Who would free them from Roman tyranny and provide them with material comforts. When He proclaimed to them that He was the living bread from heaven, and that they must partake of Him by faith, they left Him and went away. Jesus then asked His disciples, "Will ye also go away?" In answer, Peter gave a beautiful confession: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." People of God, what is earthly bread compared to heavenly? And what is this temporal life com-

pared to eternal glory? Young people, echo this confession of Peter and the disciples. Give diligent heed to the preaching of the gospel and proclaim to the church and to the world that you, by His grace, unashamedly confess Jesus as Christ, the Son of the living God. Sing Psalter 163:1–3.

July 6 Read Matthew 15:21–28

Young people, do you appreciate and love the truths of the gospel in which most of you have been brought up, or do you take them for granted? Many people do, you know, but the Syrophenecian woman in our passage today certainly did not. When Jesus seemingly ignored her request to heal her daughter, she persisted in her endeavor and worshiped Him. Then Jesus told her that it was not fair to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs, meaning that He was sent to proclaim the gospel to the Jews and not to the Gentiles. She answered, "Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' tables." What a hunger for the truth she possessed. And what a beautiful confession of her faith she expressed. Jesus exclaimed, "O woman, great is thy faith." Now the gospel goes forth to all nations. Do you love that gospel as the power of God unto salvation? God grant that you do. Sing Psalter 263:1–3.

July 7 Read Mark 9:17–24

We see in this passage a desperately troubled father and a son who was the very picture of misery, being deaf, dumb and possessed by a devil. Isn't this a picture of our wretched and sinful state as well? By nature we do not have ears to hear the gospel nor mouths to praise the Lord. After approaching Jesus' disciples for help, which they were unable to give, the father appeals to Jesus and cries, "If thou canst do anything, have compassion on us and help us." Strong faith would not approach Jesus thus with an "if." So Jesus replies in kind, "If thou canst believe, all things are possible." Then we see the father, by grace emptying his heart of doubt, crying, "Lord, I believe; help thou my unbelief." This is a beautiful confession and one that we must with an eye of faith also express daily in heartfelt contrition. Jesus, the powerful Savior, healed the son and restored peace to that troubled family. In the way of confession and forgiveness, we too possess the peace that passes all understanding and our doubts are changed to blessed assurance. Sing Psalter 398:1 and 3.

July 8 Read Job 19:21–26

Are you going through a period of trial and sadness? Do you perhaps have bodily afflictions, or feel forsaken and hopeless? We do not mean to minimize these afflictions, but wish to direct your thoughts to Job, a man who suffered unspeakable trials and afflictions. He was made destitute and childless in a day or two. His body was afflicted with a most horrible and painful disease. His friends added to his misery by accusing him falsely of committing sins that were the cause of his troubles. Although Job did not understand

why God did this, yet he believed that all this was in the hands of a sovereign God Who loved him, and would vindicate him someday. That's the meaning of a redeemer, and even in the depths of his misery, he could confess, "I know that my redeemer liveth." He could not see Christ in that full revelation as revealed to us today, but he could see him through prophecy and sacrifices. Is that your confession also, dear reader? Then you can face each day with that blessed confidence that our redeemer lives and He will be your advocate with the Father in heaven. Sing Psalter 123:1, 2 and 4.

July 9 Read Acts 8:26–39

What a wondrous work of God we see displayed in this passage! A certain man, not of the Jewish nation, who nevertheless had a copy of the Old Testament in his possession, was reading aloud from the book of Isaiah. He had a hunger for God in his heart that was divinely put there by the Spirit. Philip the Evangelist was directed to leave his mission field in Samaria for the sake of this one elect soul and preach the gospel to him. And what a gospel he preached! Christ, the Son of God, led as a lamb to the slaughter, prophesied throughout the scriptures, and fulfilled at Calvary. That gospel is the power of God unto salvation to all who believe. By grace this Ethiopian eunuch believed and gave expression with his lips, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God," a simple confession to be sure, but heartfelt and sincere. Young people make this same confession yours also, and you, too, will go on your way rejoicing. Sing Psalter 198:1, 3 and 6.

July 10 Read John 9:24–38

Jesus demonstrated that He is the light of the world in the healing of the man who was born blind. He performed this miracle on the Sabbath day and the hypocritical Pharisees were indignant and found fault as usual. They questioned both him and his parents seeking to discredit Jesus. But the man who was healed of his physical blindness gave evidence that he was also healed of his spiritual blindness, and displayed his faith by boldly refuting the Pharisees' accusations. As a result he was excommunicated from the synagogue, a really frightening thing. What about you, young people? Are you willing and ready to defend your faith at all costs? Throughout history Christians have always been persecuted for their faith, and when Antichrist reigns, this will intensify. Jesus sought out this man in love afterward and revealed to him who He was. The man, in childlike faith, responded, "Lord, I believe," and he worshiped Him. May we likewise confess this Savior, never counting what the cost may be. Sing Psalter 190:1, 3 and 4.

July 11 Read Philippians 1:18–21

"For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." Such a wonderful confession, yet such a seeming paradox. How can death possibly be a gain? Through death one loses all

the things of this earth—his possessions, his family and friends and his name. Even his body is destroyed. Death, from an earthly point of view appears to be a total loss. For those to whom Christ means nothing, whose lives are centered on earthly wealth and sinful pleasures, death will be for them a complete loss. They had no Christ in their life and neither will they have Him in death. In contrast, those who by grace have Christ as the main focus in their lives can face death in the confidence that they shall forever be with Him in glory. Do you love Christ, dear reader? Do you live for Him despite your faults and imperfections? Then confess with the apostle Paul that for you also, death will be gain, a gain so great that “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him” (I Cor. 2:9). Sing Psalter 29:1 and 3.

July 12 Read Daniel 1:3–8

Young people, can you imagine what it would be like if you were taken away from your home, from covenantal instruction, and from your church and brought to a strange land when you were about 15 years of age? Young Daniel from the tribe of Judah had to undergo this frightful experience and be brought to Babylon. Not only was his name changed from Daniel, which means, “God is my judge,” to Belteshazzar, a name most likely associated with some heathen idol, but was appointed a portion of the king’s meat as well. We read that Daniel “purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king’s meat.” What an astounding act of faith on Daniel’s part! Surely the king’s meat was delicious and tempting. So are the world’s pleasures and allurements today. But Daniel by grace remained true to his calling. And that calling which also comes to us is to live an antithetical life in the Babylon of this world that surrounds us. Will you dare to be a Daniel? Will you dare to stand alone? Pray that God will give you the guidance and strength to be faithful to Him. Sing Psalter 336:1 and 2.

July 13 Read Daniel 3:13–18

We all know about the great image that king Nebuchadnezzar erected as a monument to his exalted ego and majesty. Oh, it was an imposing structure of some 90 feet high and 9 feet wide, covered with gold. To this image all must bow and worship with the threat of a horrible death to all who refused to comply. Do we hear some faint echoes of this today; work on Sunday or lose your job, join the union or go hungry, serve the gods of this world or have no place here? Daniel’s three friends resolutely defied the king’s decree. By grace they were determined to obey God rather than man and faced this angry king who defiantly said “and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?” Then followed their beautiful confession that their God was certainly able to deliver them from the fiery furnace, but if

He chose not to do so, they would nevertheless refuse to serve the king’s gods or worship his image. This is true faith in action. We may not be faced with such an ultimatum as this, but the devil today in many ways seeks to have us deny the faith and serve the gods of this world. Let us answer him as Jesus did in Matthew 4:10, “Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.” Sing Psalter 326:1, 3 and 4.

July 14 Read John 4:39–42

Young people, what does the preaching of the true gospel mean to you? Do you attend worship services because your parents expect it? Do you come out of custom or habit? Or do you come because you hunger for that word? Perhaps at times it is a combination of the above reasons, but do you realize whom you hear in this preaching? It is Christ Himself. This is the means God has chosen to convert, feed and gather His Church. The Samaritans heard about Jesus from the lips of the woman Jesus met at the well, but when they heard Jesus’ own words, they believed and confessed that He was indeed the Christ. This word is given to the Church by the Spirit of Christ. This word is powerful. It is a two-edged sword that not only saves, but also condemns. Pray that this word may have a saving effect on your own heart that you may also confess that this Christ is indeed your Savior. Sing Psalter 337:1, 2 and 3.

July 15 Read John 11:19–27

Lazarus had died. Martha, upon meeting Jesus, heard Him say, “Thy brother shall rise again.” When she affirmed that he would rise again at the last day, Jesus spoke these words, “I am the resurrection and the life... whosoever believeth in me shall never die. Believeth thou his?” Is Martha’s answer the same as yours, dear reader? “Yea Lord I believe that thou art the Christ...” Notice that Jesus said, “I *am* the resurrection and the life,” not only at the end of the world, but right now. Because He is the life, He is also the resurrection. Resurrection does not begin after death, but before death. In regeneration we possess the life that can never die. Our bodies must enter into physical death, but never in the spiritual sense. When by grace you confess that Jesus is the Christ, that He is your Savior and Lord, you have a blessed hope and an unspeakable comfort. Sing Psalter 28:1, 4 and 5.

July 16 Read Acts 4:5–13

Can the people you meet take notice that you have been with Jesus? Oh, not personally, as His disciples were, but can they tell that His Spirit dwells in you, influencing your actions and words? Peter and John had healed a lame man in the name of Jesus and fearlessly proclaimed the gospel. This was too much for the Sanhedrin who sent soldiers to take them by force. When asked by this wicked assembly “By what power or by what name, have ye done this?” Peter boldly confessed that by the name of Jesus Christ, whom

they had crucified, and whom God raised from the dead, even by Him did they heal the lame man. He then quoted from the Psalms that the Sanhedrin knew so well and which was an indictment of their guilt in refusing the cornerstone. The Sanhedrin marveled at their boldness and took knowledge that they had been with Jesus. Let us also be ready to confess His name among men regardless of the cost. Sing Psalter 71:1, 2 and 5.

July 17 Read Acts 6:8–10; 7:51–60

Scripture and history are replete with references to saints who have died for their faith. We think immediately of Abel, the first man to die for his faith. And why did this happen? Scripture says of Cain, “his own works were evil, and his brother’s righteous.” Today we read of Stephen, the first martyr of the church of the new dispensation. Stephen, full of grace and power, gave testimony of his faith with such wisdom and knowledge that those to whom he spoke were not able to resist his words. Stephen had much knowledge. Just read his testimony before the wicked council. He brought the living word and it so enraged and convicted the Jewish leaders that they could not contain their anger. They stopped their ears and slew him. Do we have the courage to face persecution by a bold defense of the truth? By God’s grace we do, for Jesus said in Luke 21:15, “For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist.” Sing Psalter 352:1, 2 and 4.

July 18 Read I Samuel 17:42–47

Who doesn’t thrill to read about the story of David and Goliath in the Bible? From the very young to the very old, this episode captures our attention and interest. We read that David was only a youth, but what a testimony of his faith resounded in the valley of Elah. David, like most of our readers was brought up in a covenant home and instructed in the knowledge of God. Young people, how much do you appreciate that God in His mercy determined that you also have this blessed privilege? Do you confess with David that your only strength is in the God of Israel, and without Him you are helpless before the foe? We have many enemies to fight. The devil would love to see you in His grasp; the world about us invites you to join in their sinful pleasures; and our own flesh would succumb to evil except for the grace of God. Fight these enemies as David met Goliath with these words, “I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts.” Only then can you succeed in the battle of faith. Sing Psalter 97:1, 3 and 4.

July 19 Read Luke 2:25–35

In the long period before the incarnation of Christ, we read of no special revelation from God to His Church. However, God never forsakes His people for we read in Malachi 4:16, “Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened and heard it.” We

believe that aged Simeon was one of these, and the Holy Spirit revealed to him that he would see the Christ before his death. When Mary and Joseph brought the infant Jesus into the temple, Simeon took Him in his arms and said, “mine eyes have seen thy salvation.” How could this be? Was his salvation all wrapped up, so to speak, in this little babe? But truer words were never spoken. This babe was Jehovah Salvation Who grew to manhood and was hung on a tree. He bore our sins to accomplish our redemption. Can you, as Simeon did, see your salvation in this babe? Can you see Him in the world of creation? Can you see Him on every page in Scripture? Can you see with spiritual eyes of faith that He is everything to you? If so, you can also confess when you close your eyes in death, “Lord now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace.” Sing Psalter 311:1, 2 and 5.

July 20 Read Joshua 2:1–11

How strange it may seem sometimes, but how wonderful are the works of God! God is a covenant God who establishes that covenant with believers and their seed, and in that way gathers His Church. In the Old Testament that covenant line ran through the Jewish nation. However on certain occasions God reaches out to the so-called heathen people and plucks them into His fold. Such was the case with Rahab. She was a prostitute in a heathen city, yet God worked faith in her heart, for when she heard of His mighty works, she confesses to the spies: “The Lord your God, he is God in heaven above and in earth beneath.” This was not just an outward confession to save her life and that of her family, for she is numbered among the heroes of faith recorded in Hebrews 11. In inscrutable wisdom, God gathers His elect from all nations and all stations in life. Let us also confess this God as our God, Who will be our guide even unto death. Sing Psalter 139:1, 4 and 5.

July 21 Read Joshua 24:14, 15

Do you hear aged Joshua speak to you today, dear reader? As a type of Christ he led Israel into the promised land of Canaan. He had witnessed personally all the wonders God displayed in delivering them from Egyptian bondage and now he reminded the people of their history, holding before them all that God had done. It stands to reason then, so to speak, that they must serve this God and Him alone. But knowing that by nature they, and we too, are sinful and idolatrous, he adds, “if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve.” And then he gives examples or choices of some heathen gods. This is not a choice of a free will, as some would maintain, that we have the ability to choose either for or against God. No, God commands all to serve Him alone. Only by His regenerating grace are we able to do that. Joshua concludes with “but as for me and my house we will serve the Lord.” That is a testimony from one who, though weak and sinful by

nature as we are, can confidently confess this before all the people. Take those same words on your lips, people of God, and give thanks to God for His great mercy. Sing Psalter 394:1–3.

July 22 Read Deuteronomy 33:26–29

Moses must climb the mountain of Nebo and die there. Although he was an hundred and twenty years old, we read that his eye was not dim nor his natural force abated. Israel stood ready to enter Canaan. Moses, who led this people for forty years through the wilderness, understandably desired to enter with them into the promised land. Due to his sin at Kadesh, God withheld this privilege from him. Did Moses despair, or blame God for this? No, for he knew that God was forever faithful to His covenant people. He then pronounced a blessing upon the children of Israel, which culminated in these comforting and triumphant words, “There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun.... The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.” What a picture of confidence and faith in a God who is eternal and almighty. Moses can now die in the assurance that both he and all God’s people will surely enter that heavenly Canaan. Make that your confession also, dear reader, and nestle safely in those everlasting arms. Sing Psalter 281:1, 3 and 4.

July 23 Read I Samuel 2:1–11

Hannah’s beautiful prayer of confession and praise came from the lips of one who formerly was sorrowful. The Lord had withheld children from her, and to aggravate this condition, her husband’s other wife constantly mocked and taunted her. Every believing Israelitess desired sons and daughters so that in their generations they might continue to have a name and a place in God’s country. She poured out her soul to God that if He would give her a son she would present him to the Lord in His service. God answered that prayer and gave her Samuel, whose name means, “heard of God.” When the child was weaned she took him to the house of the Lord in Shiloh and poured out a prayer of thanksgiving to God. This was a remarkable prayer which not only expressed vindication over against wicked Peninnah, but extolled the Lord as holy, as a rock of strength, and as a God Who keepeth covenant and mercy with His people. Make this prayer your own, dear reader, and go on your way rejoicing, as did Hannah. Sing Psalter 111:1, 2 and 3.

July 24 Read Psalm 73:22–28

Most of you are well acquainted with this psalm that Asaph wrote under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Asaph certainly was a child of God, but for a time, when making a study of wicked men and their works, he states that his steps had well nigh slipped and he was envious at the prosperity of the wicked. Do we make this same mistake? It is true that most of the famous and wealthy people of the world

care not one whit for the things of God and they revel in all sorts of sinful pleasures. It seems that everything goes their way, while God’s people suffer reproach, deprivation and mockery. Then Asaph entered the house of God and beheld the truth. The wicked are on a slippery slope that leads to destruction, while God’s people are held by His right hand that will lift them up to glory. And that glory is heaven with God Himself. We do not know very much about heaven, but the glimpses that are revealed to us in Scripture are wonderful indeed. Let us by grace confess with Asaph that God is the strength of our hearts and our portion forever. Sing Psalter 201:1 and 5–7.

July 25 Read Lamentations 3:21–32

God raised up many prophets in the course of biblical history to testify against the wicked and admonish and comfort His people. A prophet’s life was not easy, as a rule, and Jeremiah’s is no exception. He stands alone in circumstances of the most desperate nature. He was called to testify of the awful judgment coming upon Jerusalem. He had to suffer terrible reproach including imprisonment, but he faithfully declared the word of the Lord. He is rightly called the “weeping prophet,” for he saw the wickedness of the people, the invasion of the Babylonians, and the final destruction of Jerusalem. In the book of Lamentations he pours out his heavy sorrow, but in the midst of his lament, he confesses that God is merciful, His compassions never fail and His faithfulness is great. These are words of faith wrought by the Spirit to give “beauty for ashes...and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.” Dear reader, when you experience sorrow and loss, think on these words and be comforted with the only comfort we have in life and in death, and that is that we belong both body and soul to our faithful Savior. Sing Psalter 205:1, 3 and 13.

July 26 Read Jonah 2:1–9

Jonah was a prophet in Israel at the time of the reign of Jeroboam II. He was sent to Nineveh, a great pagan city in Assyria, to warn of God’s impending judgment upon it. We all know how he disobeyed that command and booked passage on a ship going in another direction. Jonah, in his fervor for Israel, could not understand that God was making an exception to His primary concern and love for the people of Israel, by sending him to warn Nineveh. But this was disobedience on Jonah’s part and as a result he was cast into the sea, which could only mean into death itself. But God in His mercy prepared a refuge for him. He was preserved alive in the face of death inside the belly of the great fish. There he realized his deliverance, and though he was a castaway, yet he was convinced that he would once again see God’s temple. He confessed his sin and proclaimed that salvation is of the Lord. Upon his return to dry land he obeyed God’s directives. Young people, when you walk in disobedience and God chastises you, thank Him for it, turn

from that way and confess with Jonah that God is indeed merciful and in Him alone is your salvation. Sing Psalter 110:1–3.

July 27 Read Habakkuk 3:17–19

The exact time of Habakkuk's life is not known, although we may conclude that he was one of the last prophets before the Babylonian captivity. He speaks in verse 6 of chapter 1 that the Chaldeans who were cruel and ruthless oppressors shall come and possess the land of Judah. He shudders at the very thought of it. He realizes that his nation was ripe for the judgment and he trembles at the majesty of God in chapter 3. Then he breaks forth in a prayer of confidence that although the entire land becomes desolate with no provision for human sustenance, yet he will rejoice in the Lord and joy in the God of his salvation. That is an amazing confession! It is a confession that is only possible by the work of grace and based on the redemptive work of Christ. We read in Psalm 63:3, "thy lovingkindness is better than life." Life, after all, is only temporary. To be saved unto eternity in glory is so wonderful that it defies description. We probably will not experience such calamities as those that faced the prophet Habakkuk, but let us confess that regardless of what the Lord sends us, we will say that He is good and we will joy in His salvation. Sing Psalter 345:1 and 2.

July 28 Read Genesis 22:1–14

How could God demand that Abraham offer up Isaac for a burnt offering? Isaac was the promised seed, a miracle son, out of whose loins the Messiah must come. If Isaac died, there could be no covenant seed, no Church, and no salvation. Abraham doubtless thought about all this as he obediently journeyed to Mt. Moriah. When Isaac asked his father about a lamb for the burnt offering, Abraham replied in faith, "God will provide himself a lamb." We stand amazed at this demonstration of faith. Abraham by grace determined to obey God implicitly even if he had to kill his son, for we read in Hebrews 11 that he believed God could and would raise him up even from the dead. God spared Isaac and provided a ram on the mount, but God did not spare His only begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Thanks be to God for that precious sacrifice wherein is all our salvation. Confess this Savior before all the world, young people, and pray that you may always be faithful to Him. Sing Psalter 362:1–3.

July 29 Read Nehemiah 2:17–20

What is your response, people of God, when you meet with opposition in pursuing God's work? This work can take many forms such as starting our own Christian day schools, seminary, evangelistic endeavors, missionary work, and the like. Sometimes that opposition is from without, sometimes from within. Nehemiah was filled with a zeal for God and was convinced of the necessity to rebuild the

walls of Jerusalem and erect a temple. The people had become accustomed to their life in Babylon and many were content with living there. There were also enemies of God near Jerusalem who vigorously opposed any rebuilding of the Lord's heritage. But Nehemiah, under the guidance of God, persisted because he knew it was necessary for the spiritual welfare of the people. Nehemiah answered those who opposed the work by firmly stating, "The God of heaven, he will prosper us, therefore we his servants will arise and build." May this be our confession and zeal, too, when called upon to support kingdom causes. Sing Psalter 357:1–3.

July 30 Read Matthew 8:5–13

Jesus had returned to Capernaum after preaching the sermon on the mount. This was His headquarters where He labored in Galilee. He performed many mighty works there, but the city made itself unworthy of the gospel. Even worse than Sodom, for Jesus declared, if those works had been done in Sodom they would have repented long ago. In this wicked city, a Roman centurion came to Jesus beseeching Him to heal his servant who lay at home grievously sick. When Jesus said He would come and heal him, the centurion confessed that he was unworthy of Jesus entering his home and that if He would but speak a word only, his servant would be healed. A beautiful confession from a Gentile in a Jewish city, which rejected Jesus! Jesus marveled and exclaimed that He had not found so great faith in Israel. Do we take all that we have for granted? Jesus said that the children of the kingdom would be brought in from the east and west such as this centurion. Pray that your faith may be sincere as was the centurion's and that it may manifest itself in a godly walk. Sing Psalter 194:1–3.

July 31 Read Acts 10:1–4

We have a fourfold description of a man in verse two which all of us by the grace of God should try to emulate. This man was not a Jew who normally would have been brought up in a covenant home with all its attendant blessings. He was a Gentile, a Roman centurion, but undoubtedly one who had heard the gospel. We read that he was devout, which means sincere and pious; he feared God with all his house; he gave much alms to the people; and prayed to God always. God had worked faith in his heart, and his whole life reflected that. God appeared to him in a vision, acknowledged his fervent prayers, and instructed him to go to Peter. Peter, being forewarned by a heavenly vision, was prepared to receive Cornelius and instruct him in the gospel of the resurrected Savior. As a result, Cornelius and his family were baptized and became the first Gentile converts into the Church. May all with whom we come into contact see the same qualities of Cornelius in our lives that our walk may be consistent with our confession. Sing Psalter 369:1–3.

Uprooting Terrorism

by J. P. deKlerk

It is no accident that the most vicious terrorism originates from the least evangelized area of the world. The Muslim Middle East represents the most complex challenge and an enormous military threat to the free world. It is also the greatest missionary challenge to the Christian Church. Muslim states are the most severe persecutors of Christians. Radical Muslim extremists are merciless terrorists, hijackers, kidnappers, suicide bombers and assassins.

The most active missionary in this part of the world is Rev. Peter Hammond, the leader of the Christian Front-line Fellowship (seven ministers together), who was born in the USA but migrated with his parents to South Africa and received South African nationality. He is pictured with his wife and children in Cape Town: Lenora, Daniela, Calvin, Andrea, Peter and Christopher.



The Fellowship preaches, spreads Bibles in several languages (translated by themselves into languages like Moru in South Sudan, which has become a Christian nation, constantly under attack by the Muslim government of North Sudan).

Rev. Hammond says, "The failure of the Christian church to fulfil the Great Commission in the Middle East continues to have far-reaching and disastrous conse-

quences. Islam is a challenge that we cannot ignore. The primary suspect for the multiple coordinated terrorist attacks on the United States, Osama Bin Laden, aside from his extensive business and terrorist connections, is also a major sponsor of Islamic missionary activity."



Here you see how the Bibles are delivered, via a primitive bridge over a river, into Moru-land (South Sudan). Twenty packages were brought to the local church building that day.

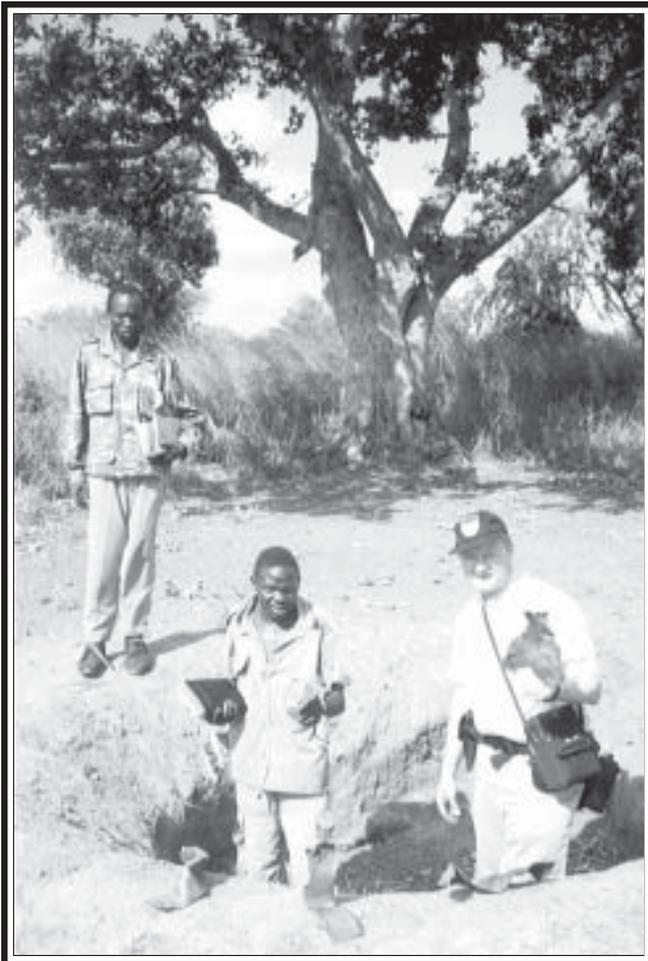
The Christian Blacks of Southern Sudan are on the very frontline of the battle for faith and freedom. Since 1955 they have been resisting the southward expansion of militant Islam. Rev. Hammond says, "Bin Laden finances the Islamic Propagation Centre International based in Durban, South Africa. He paid for the translation of the Qur'an into Zulu. His hatred is more religiously motivated than political."

The Christians suffer. At the top of the next page, you see a church completely destroyed by bombs of the Muslims, who use Russian "Antonov" planes. One morning when Rev. Hammond was in the pulpit, a bombardment started and everybody went outside. He tells, "I heard the terrible screaming sound of fast approaching bombs. It was so loud that I immediately dived to the



ground and flattened myself. Five bombs exploded in quick succession. The ground shook and I saw pillars of fire and smoke erupting one after another, alongside the church. The air was thick with acrid smelling smoke and flying debris. As I lay on the ground I could distinctly hear the thud of shrapnel and pieces of branches and debris hitting the ground.”

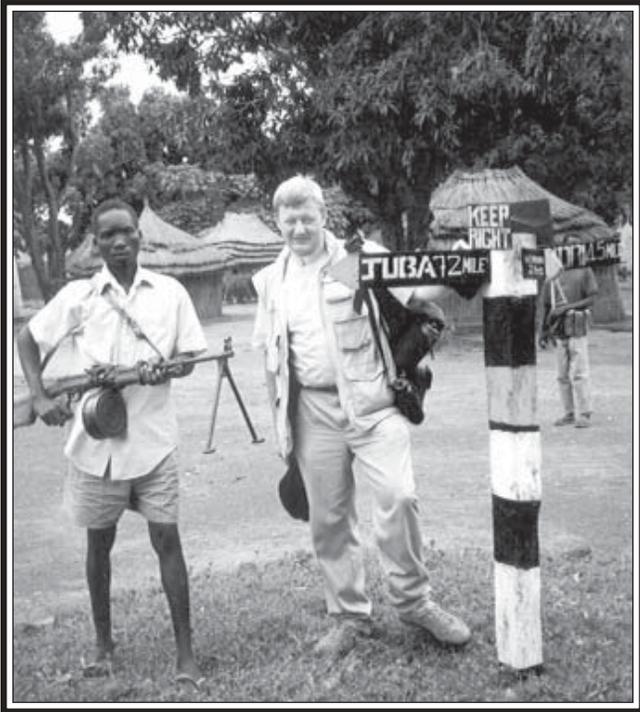
In the picture, Rev. Hammond is standing with a deacon in a crater made by one of the bombs. They are holding pieces of the bombs. From a bomb shelter, Rev. Hammond heard people praying in three different languages. The “Antonov” returned and three bombs hurtled straight down on top of the shelter. Rev. Hammond tells: “Lord protect us, was the prayer of my heart as I tensed for the impact. There didn’t seem to be any way to escape injury or death. The bombs exploded right next to where we were. The noise was deafening. I saw a huge cloud of debris and smoke. We seemed to be getting buried. Later when I stepped out of the hole I was overcome with the exhilaration of knowing that God had protected us. Moving quickly around to check who had been hit, I was amazed that no one had been injured. Of the bombs that had been dropped, the closest landed less than 20 meters from where I had been crouching. Some trees were blackened, the leaves were singed. Truly, He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.” The photo shows Christian



military who were among the churchgoers, with their Commander Daniel, gathering by a shrapnel-scarred tree under the Christian flag of South Sudan (a red cross on a blue field in the corner of a white flag). Daniel said, “We used to think that our power was in our guns, but now we know that our power is in God.” He liberated several villages and brought many people back from slavery under the Muslims.

Rev. Hammond says, “Although many would see America as a secular country with a large number of Christians, to radical Islamists like Bin Laden, America is the largest and strongest Christian nation on earth, and the primary supporter of Christian missions worldwide.

By striking at the financial center of America, one of his aims could have been to cause a drop in support for Christian missions, even as he helps finance a massive continent-wide Islamic offensive to turn Africa into a Muslim continent.” The photo shows Rev. Hammond protected by a Christian soldier, next to a road sign telling him that it is yet 72 miles to the nearest town, Juba (where the mountains are).



He says, “The multinational Al-Qa’ida organization set up by Bin Laden during the time he was based in Sudan (1991-1996) seeks the “global radicalization of existing Islamic groups and the creation of radical Islamic groups where none existed. Al-Qa’ida supports Muslim fighters in Afghanistan, Bosnia, Chechnya, Tajikstan, Somalia, Yemen and Kosovo. It also trains members of terrorist organizations from the Philippines, Algeria and Eritrea. Look at the globe. Al-Qa’ida’s goal is to unite all Muslims and to establish a government which follows the rule of the Caliphas by force to overflow nearly all Muslim governments, which are corrupt, to drive Western influence from those countries, and eventually to abolish state boundaries” (aldus de publicatie Al-Qa’ida, FAS 9/17/01).

In October 1995 Muammar Gaddafi (Libya) hosted a two-week conference in Tripoli, which was attended

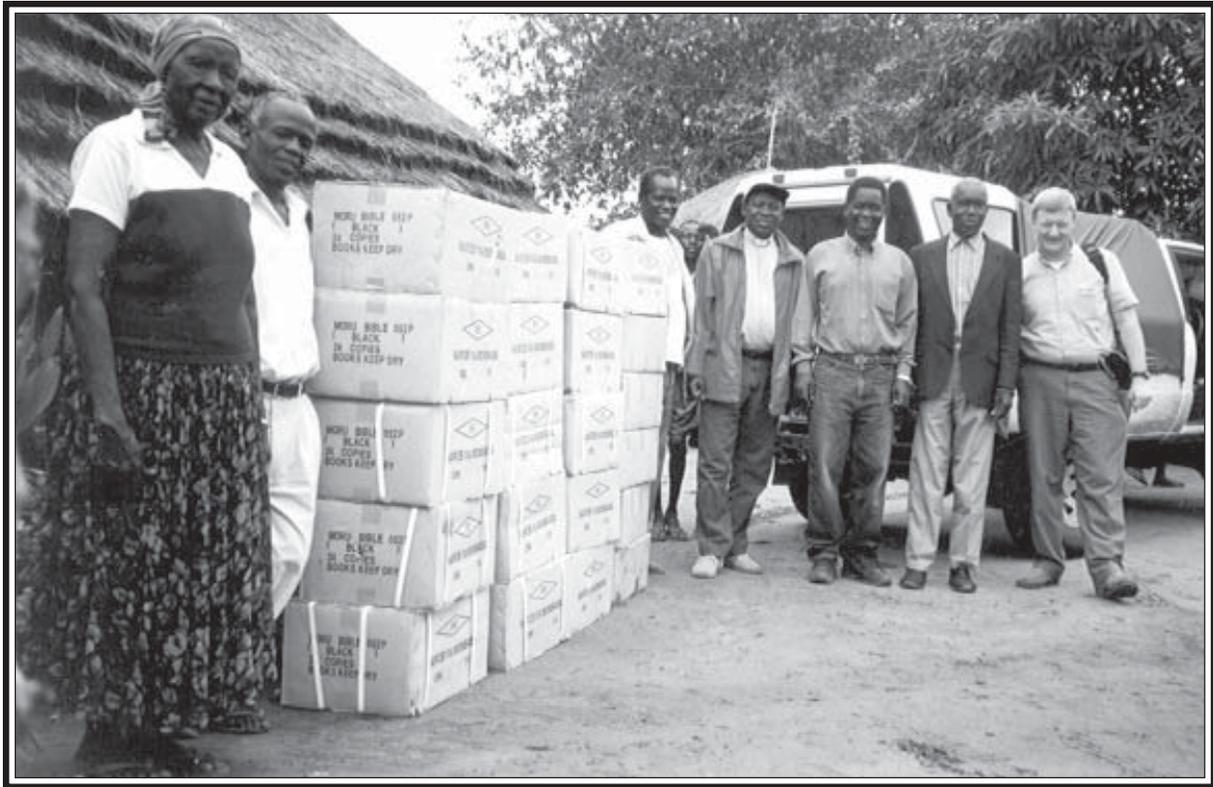
by Muslim leaders from 80 countries. At this Muslim Leaders Conference, strategies to transform Africa into an Islamic continent were discussed. Participants openly admitted that their goals were to make Arabic the official language of the continent and Islam the official religion. One South African member of Parliament, Farouk Cassin declared, “It will probably be the biggest revolution to sweep Africa.”

The head of the Islamic Propagation Centre International at that time, Yousuf Deedat, announced afterwards that South Africa was high on the agenda of the Islamic offensive, “We are going to turn South Africa into a Muslim state. We have the money to do it,” he said (from the *Sunday Times* 10/22/95). At present, less than 2% of South Africans are Muslims. About 40% of the whole population of Africa are Muslims. About 17 of the 55 countries in Africa are officially Islamic states.

The best weapon to stop them is the Bible, says Rev. Peter Hammond. On the next page, Rev. Hammond is near another church in South Sudan, founded by the Frontline Fellowship, bringing 20 big parcels with Bibles in the Moru language. He is welcomed by the elders. (Notice, all the churches in this area have thatched roofs.) The name of this town is Lui. The building was three times destroyed and rebuilt. Rev. Hammond says, “What few Westerners understand is that Muslim leaders who call for the overthrow of all governments and the establishment of an Islamic superstate controlling all aspects of life for every person on earth, are not necessarily the extremists on the fringe of Islam. Jihad, the subjugation and forcible conversion of all people to Islam and world domination are, in fact, central tenants of Islam. Jihad is the sixth pillar of Islam. It was so important to Muhammad that he declared it to be the second most important deed in Islam. He said in “The Hadith, Al Bukhari” Vol. 1, No. 25, “Allah’s apostle was asked, ‘What is the best deed?’ He replied, ‘To believe in Allah and his apostle.’ The questioner then asked, ‘What is the next in goodness?’ He replied, ‘To participate in Jihad (religious fighting) in Allah’s cause.’”

Now, most Muslims are neither terrorists nor terrorist sympathizers. While many Muslims publicly rejoiced over the news of the horrific terrorist attacks on New York and Washington D.C. (9/11/01), most did not. We need to be careful not to blame all Muslims, for what certain individuals do in the name of Islam.

But, in fact, Muslims are often allies of Christians in campaigns against gambling, pornography, homosexuality, abortion, evolutionism and atheism. Muslims as



well as Christians, know that there is one God who is both the Creator and the eternal Judge of the whole world and everyone in it. However, it is very important for us to recognize the Quranic roots, which are quoted by the Muslim terrorists to support their atrocities. If this violent position does not represent mainstream Islam, Muslim leaders must clearly denounce the literal application of these Jihad verses and declare apostate all Muslims who resort to terrorism as murderers destined to an eternity in hell.

The Quran teaches that Muslims are superior to all others. "Ye (Muslims) are the best of peoples evolved for mankind" (Surah 3:110). Muslims are forbidden to befriend Jews or Christians. "Oh ye who believe! Take not the Jews and the Christians for your friends and protectors. They are but friends and protectors to each other. And he amongst you that turns to them (for friendship) is one of them" (Surah 5:54). Islam instructs its adherents to fight until all their opponents submit. Christians and Jews may be spared if they pay "Jizya," a penalty tax, with willing submission. "Fight those who believe not in God nor the last day. Nor acknowledge the religion of truth (even if they are) of the people of the Book, until they pay Jizya (tribute taxes) with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued" (Surah 9:29). "Fight

and slay the pagans wherever ye find them and seize them, beleaguer them, and lie in wait (ambush) for them in every stratagem (of war)" (Surah 9:5 and 2:193). "Therefore, when ye meet the unbelievers (in fight), smite at their necks; at length, when ye have thoroughly subdued them, bind a bond firmly (on them); thereafter (is the time for) either generosity or ransom: until the war lays down its burdens, thus (are ye commanded)" (Surah 47:4).

For those who resist Islam, execution or mutilation is decreed. "The punishment of those who wage war against Allah and his apostle, and strive with might and main for mischief through the land is: execution or crucifixion, or the cutting of the hands and feet from opposite sides or exile from the land" (Surah 5:36).

Now, all of these texts appear to be contradicted by Surah 2:256, which states, "Let there be no compulsion in religion." Yes, but there is a clear break between the early Muhammad, and the later Muhammad. The early one was married to only one wife, Khadeja, courageously spoke out against idolatry and polytheism in Mecca and encouraged friendship with the Christians. The later one, after the death of his first wife and flight to Medina, accumulated at least 14 more wives, including nine-year-old Aisha, started raiding caravans, massacred 600 Jews

for failing to acknowledge him as the prophet, and propagated the doctrine of Jihad. In a sense, you see, there are two Muhammads and two Qurans! The early pre-Medina Surahs demonstrate tolerance and respect for Christians, whereas the later Surahs unleashed Jihad.

Well, in the Mishkat the rewards for participation in Jihad are spelled out. “The Messenger of Allah said: ‘To, whichever village you go, its one fifth is for Allah and his Messenger and the remainder is for you’ (Mishkat II, page 412). “The soldiers of Islam fought tooth and nail. They would get Paradise in case of death in a holy war, and booties in case of conquest, Jihad is therefore the best source of all acquisitions” (Mishkat II, page 440).

“Jihad is one of the chief meritorious acts in the eye of Islam and it is the best source of earnings” (Mishkat II, page 340). “This is the best method of earning both spiritual and temporal. If victory is won, there is enormous booty and conquest of a country, which cannot be equalled to any other source of earning. If there is a defeat or death, there is everlasting Paradise and a great spiritual benefit. This sort of Jihad is conditional upon pure motive, i.e., for establishing the kingdom of Allah on earth” (Mishkat II, page 253). In the Hadith, Muhammad is quoted as decreeing that Muslims may not be punished for killing a non-Muslim. “No Muslims should be killed for killing a kafir (infidel)” (Vol. 9:50).

Many assume that the concept of Jihad, or holy war, is aberration not truly representative of Islam. Some leaders have stated that “Islam teaches a God of love just like Christianity and Judaism” and “no religion condones violence or terrorism.” Unfortunately that is not true. Islam is no ordinary religion.”

Islam divides the world into two sectors: Dar-al-Islam (the House of Islam) and Dar-al-Harb (The House of War). The only countries considered to be at peace are those where Islamic law (the Sharia) is enforced. All other countries, as part of Dar-al-Harb, are considered legitimate targets. It is significant that the calendar of Islam does not begin with the birth of Muhammad, nor the onset of his “revelations,” nor the assembling of the first Muslim community, nor the flight of Muslim refugees to Abyssinia. The twelve years of persecution in Mecca were not considered the start of their new religion. The Muslim calendar only begins when Islam became a *political* state, under Sharim Law, in Medina.

Medina was a city in Saudië with 50,000 inhabitants. Almost as important for the Muslims as Mecca. Since 622 the prophet lived here, till he died, and his body was buried in the mosque of El Haram. Next to

Medina still stands the oldest mosque, founded by Muhammed himself, in Kubo.

The word Islam in Arabic means submission, surrender or subjugation. A Muslim is one who submits. The Arabic word for peace is Salam. Islam is the active form of Salam. Muslims see themselves as a “peace-making force” using argument, intrigue, commerce, threats, terrorism, warfare and every other means possible to secure Islam as the only religion worldwide. “And fight them on until there is no more tumult or oppression, and there prevails justice and faith in Allah altogether and everywhere!” (Surah 8:39).

In the light of these teachings, it should be no surprise to learn that since 1948, the 21 Arab countries have suffered 30 wars, 63 successful revolutions, at least 75 unsuccessful revolutions, and 36 heads of state were murdered. In the Arab world, revolutions and assassinations have been the most prevalent means of political expression and attaining power. One out of every three barrels of oil sold by the Middle East has gone to pay for weapons.

How dangerous! One needs to remember the rapid expansion of Islam, by the sword, across North Africa, into Spain, throughout Asia Minor and into the Balkans. The Islamic Jihad of the seventh to the tenth centuries wiped out more than half of the church worldwide. Prior to this, Christianity was the predominant religion of North Africa and the Middle East.

The Crusades of the Middle Ages were a reaction to the Islamic invasion of the Holy Lands (those places where our Lord was born, lived and ministered, was crucified and raised from the dead) and centuries of Islamic Jihad. The Saracens (as the Muslim invaders were called) had desecrated Christian places of worship and severely persecuted Christians. Pilgrims were being prevented from visiting those sites sacred to their faith. To this day many Muslims continue their “holy war” against Christians. For example in Sudan.

Millions of Christians have been slaughtered through the centuries by Islamic militants—such as the over 1,500,000 Armenians murdered in Turkey in 1915. In Sudan, Osama Bin Laden built the framework for his Al-Qa’ida terrorists. ❖

P.S. Thanks to Rev. Peter Hammond, who provided the photographs.

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

George M. Ophoff (9)

Marriage

by Prof. Herman Hanko

It was during his seminary years that George met and married Jane Boom. There are few people who knew her who would not agree that she was perhaps one of the most self-effacing women one could ever meet. We shall have to return to a discussion of this remarkable woman in some future article; but there are few women who understood as completely as Mrs. Ophoff what the Scriptures mean when they speak of a virtuous wife: "Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; ...whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands: Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him Lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement." I Peter 3: 1-6.

Mrs. Ophoff was a woman who lived solely for her husband. We believe (and the words are often spoken at a marriage ceremony) that God brings a man and woman together to be joined in marriage. When young couples see the hand of God in their lives and seek the guidance of the Lord in the choice of a wife, God brings together those who are best suited to each other that they may together fulfill their God-given role in God's covenant and kingdom. This was eminently true of Rev. and Mrs. Ophoff. Rev. Ophoff was the kind of man who simply could not take care of himself. Mrs. Ophoff was the kind

of woman who found here delight in taking care of the needs of her husband. This was her life. So much was this true that when Rev. Ophoff, at the end of his life, had no more direct need of her because he had to be cared for by others in his infirmities, she soon also had no purpose in life. Very shortly after he died, she too went on to glory.

I bring this matter up here because this very self-effacement of Mrs. Ophoff is probably the reason why no one living today seems to know anything about her early life. Even her own children know nothing about her prior to her marriage. All this must not be interpreted to mean that she was a kind of mousy character, a shadowy woman, a person without character and personality who sort of faded into the woodwork and went unobserved. She was not the kind of woman who without character of her own lived a colorless, drab, unnoticed life. Exactly the contrary was true. She had character and personality such as few have. My father tells about the time when he was visiting

her in the hospital toward the end of her life. He was in the room with a nurse who was attending her, and he observed that the nurse was studying her closely, although from a distance. When my father raised a quizzical eyebrow to the nurse as if to ask why the nurse looked so intently at this old and sick woman, the nurse responded with the words: "I have seldom if ever, seen a woman with so much character written on her face."

Jane Boom, the future Mrs. Ophoff, was born January 12, 1892. She lived with her family somewhere in the southwest part of Grand Rapids and was with her

When young couples see the hand of God in their lives and seek the guidance of the Lord in the choice of a wife, God brings together those who are best suited to each other that they may together fulfill their God-given role in God's covenant and kingdom.



family, a member of the Fifth Reformed Church. Her parents were charter members of this church, although her father, while he could probably be called a religious man in the very general sense of the word, rarely, if ever, attended church himself. Her mother however was an extremely pious and God-fearing Christian. It was from her mother that she received most of her spiritual upbringing in the days of her childhood and youth. This training was effective, for Jane was well-versed in the Scriptures and understood the principles of the truth. This is evident from the fact that she did not hesitate to join the Christian Reformed Church when she married George: and she was a staunch supporter of her husband throughout the many years of controversy in which they lived. She did not support her husband, however, as one who did not understand what her husband was doing, as one who blindly followed him whom she dearly loved; rather, she was always vitally interested in the issues which concerned him, was able to discuss these issues with him in such a way that his own thoughts were clarified, and was able to ask the penetrating and intelligent questions which served to crystallize his own thinking. Yet at the same time, though she was a supporter of her husband out of deep conviction, she was a supporter in the fullest sense of the word.

Jane Boom was working as a milliner (For those of this more modern generation who have no idea what a

milliner is, it is probably necessary to explain that a milliner is one who makes hats.) in the Boston Store in downtown Grand Rapids at the time she met Rev. Ophoff. While it might be interesting to speculate how these two met, no one seems to know. That God brought them together is evident.

George Ophoff and Jane Boom were married on August 31, 1920, while George was still in the Seminary. Because the old Prof. Hemkes was still living and was still in need of care, George and his new wife moved in with the aged professor, and Mrs. Ophoff assumed responsibility for the care of her grandfather by marriage along with the responsibility for the care of her new husband.

It is interesting to note at this point that the marriage ceremony was performed by Rev. John Schaap. This point needs some emphasis because, although we shall return to this briefly a little later on, Rev. Schaap had a great deal of influence in the Ophoff family. He was an uncle of George because he had married a sister of George's mother. He was a close friend of the family and often visited in the home. He was a well-respected minister in the denomination and was thoroughly informed about affairs in the churches.

Rev. Schaap was not the only minister in the Ophoff relation. Rev. Henry Schulze was Rev. Ophoff's brother-in-law. Rev. Schulze was a minister for a time in the Christian Reformed Church; but later became professor in Calvin College; and later still, was made president of the college. The point is that these two influential men were part of the close circle of the Ophoff family and had a great deal of influence in the family. This was especially true in the common grace controversy and in the split of 1924. Both men were strong defenders of common grace, and Rev. Ophoff was forced to take his stand on the opposite side of the issue over against all his family and relation.

However all this may be, the Ophoff's care of Prof. Hemkes did not last too long. George and his wife married in August of 1920. In December of 1920 Prof. Hemkes died. But George and his wife continued to live in the house of George's grandfather until George was ordained in his first pastorate in Riverbend, Michigan in January of 1922. In the fall and winter of 1920 and in the winter and spring of 1921 George finished his last year in Seminary and graduated in May of 1921. ❖

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

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"

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for those interested in chaperoning.

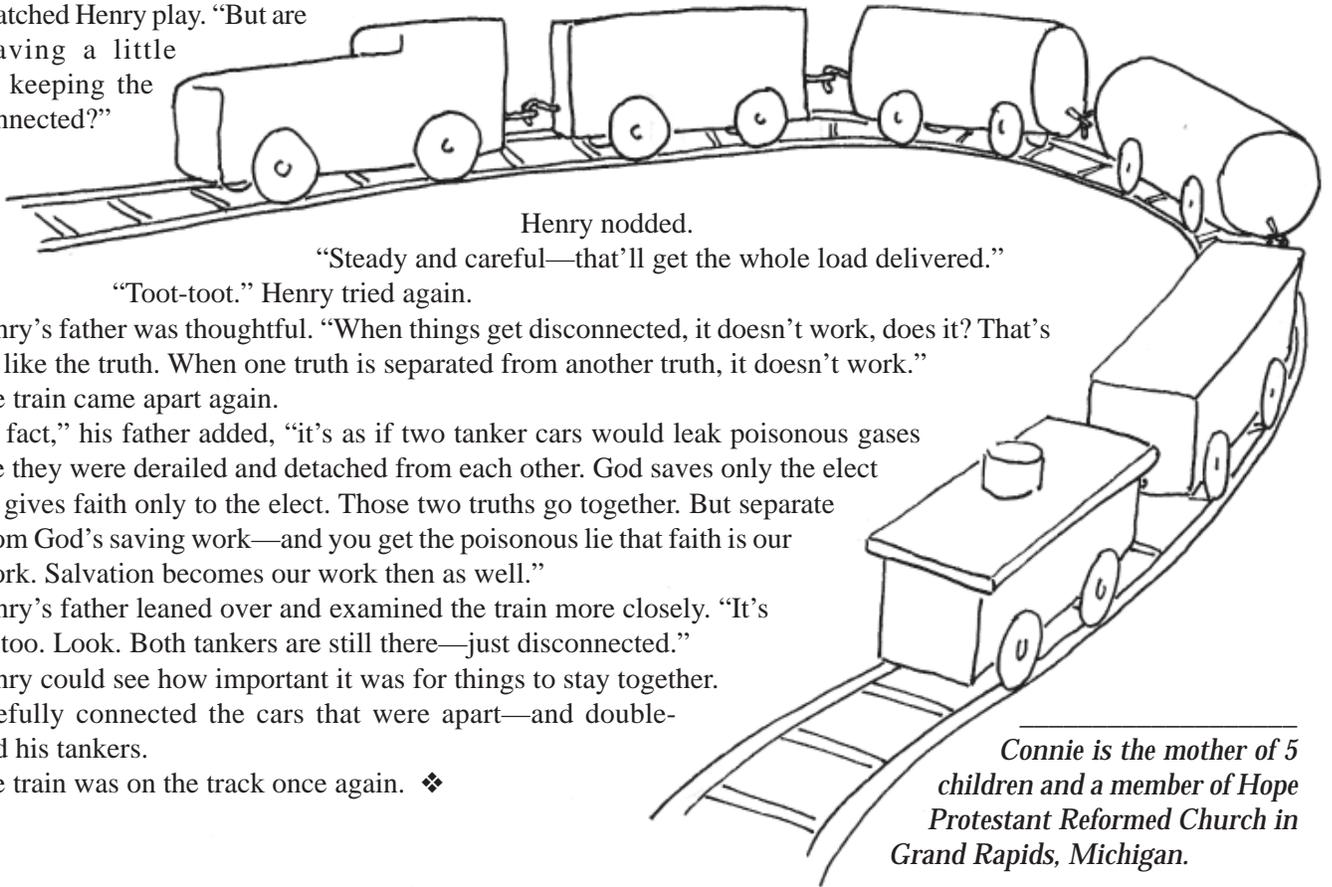
Look for more information
regarding this years convention at
www.prca.org

"LITTLE LIGHTS"

Connections

The train was all connected—engine, coal cars, tankers, and caboose. Henry pushed it around the track, watching how each car followed behind another. “Toot-toot!” He brought the engine through a tunnel and around a curve, but two of the cars came apart from each other.

“Trains are fun, aren’t they?” his father said as he watched Henry play. “But are you having a little trouble keeping the cars connected?”



... *let it shine!*

by Connie Meyer

Henry nodded.

“Steady and careful—that’ll get the whole load delivered.”

“Toot-toot.” Henry tried again.

Henry’s father was thoughtful. “When things get disconnected, it doesn’t work, does it? That’s kind of like the truth. When one truth is separated from another truth, it doesn’t work.”

The train came apart again.

“In fact,” his father added, “it’s as if two tanker cars would leak poisonous gases because they were derailed and detached from each other. God saves only the elect and He gives faith only to the elect. Those two truths go together. But separate faith from God’s saving work—and you get the poisonous lie that faith is our own work. Salvation becomes our work then as well.”

Henry’s father leaned over and examined the train more closely. “It’s sneaky too. Look. Both tankers are still there—just disconnected.”

Henry could see how important it was for things to stay together. He carefully connected the cars that were apart—and double-checked his tankers.

The train was on the track once again. ❖

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

In the 2nd Head of the Canons, Paragraph 6 of the Rejection of Errors, the men of the Synod of Dordt warned against very crafty and subtle—and *serious*—error. Find the underlined words from this section in the puzzle at the right.

The Synod rejects the errors of those:

VI. Who use the difference between meriting and appropriating, to the end that they may instill into the minds of the imprudent and inexperienced this teaching...that, while some obtain the pardon of sin and eternal life, and others do not, this difference depends on their own free will.... For these...seek to instill in the people the destructive poison of the Pelagian errors.

W	O	P	S	R	E	H	T	O	E	K	M	D	R	E
I	F	F	A	R	I	M	P	R	U	D	E	N	T	F
L	P	E	R	O	L	D	S	H	G	C	L	T	S	I
L	A	N	R	E	T	E	V	A	N	N	P	R	O	L
D	S	N	W	F	E	S	T	E	O	X	O	P	M	I
E	D	A	S	K	L	T	I	V	D	R	E	T	E	G
G	N	I	T	A	I	R	P	O	R	P	P	A	I	C
T	I	G	M	X	E	U	T	E	A	C	H	I	N	G
H	M	A	L	P	C	C	D	E	P	E	N	D	S	E
E	W	L	X	P	R	T	O	M	S	O	C	E	T	E
S	M	E	R	I	T	I	N	G	F	T	W	O	I	R
E	N	P	K	A	O	V	P	O	I	S	O	N	L	N
I	A	D	I	F	F	E	R	E	N	C	E	P	L	E

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Church News

BAPTISMS

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

Mark 16:16

The sacrament of Holy Baptism was administered to:

Seth Daniel, son of Mr. & Mrs. Mike Fennema—
Edgerton, MN
Payton James, son of Mr. & Mrs. Chad Corson—
Grandville, MI
Erika Joy, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Mitchell Kamps—
Grandville, MI
Blake Andrew, son of Mr. & Mrs. Bob Cammenga—
Holland, MI
Anthony James, son of Mr. & Mrs. Kimmy Kooiker—Hull,
IA
Heather Elaina, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Brian
VanEngen—Hull, IA
Megan Renae, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Shawn
Karsemeyer—Redlands, CA
Cory James, son of Mr. & Mrs. Timothy den Hartog—
Redlands, CA
Jake Robert, son of Mr. & Mrs. Robert Holleman—South
Holland, IL
Caleb Edward, son of Mr. & Mrs. Ed Ophoff—Southeast,
MI
Cameron Elyse, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Dwight Kuiper—
Southeast, MI
Ashley Marie, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Matt Velthouse—
Southeast, MI
Dylan Richard, son of Mr. & Mrs. Eric Lubbers—South-
west, MI
Malachi John, son of Mr. & Mrs. John Kamps—South-
west, MI
Monte Alexander, son of Mr. & Mrs. Jay Kalsbeek—
Trinity, 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:

Kathryn Jefferies—Edmonton, Alberta
Danielle Feenstra—Georgetown, MI
Jeff Baatenburg—Holland, MI
Rachel Stouwie—Peace, IL
Annalise Venhuizen—Peace, IL
Ross VanBaren—Randolph, WI
Corrie VanBaren—Randolph, WI

MARRIAGES

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

Matthew 19:5

United in the bond of Holy Matrimony were:

Mr. Arjen Vreugdenhil and Miss Jodi Oomkes—Faith, MI
Mr. David Bleyenbergh and Miss Sara VanTil—Grandville,
MI
Mr. Ed Tolsma and Miss Mandy Bruinsma—Kalamazoo,
MI
Mr. Nathan Langerak and Miss Carrie Dykstra—Trinity,
MI