

Beacon Lights

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“Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits.”

Romans 12:16

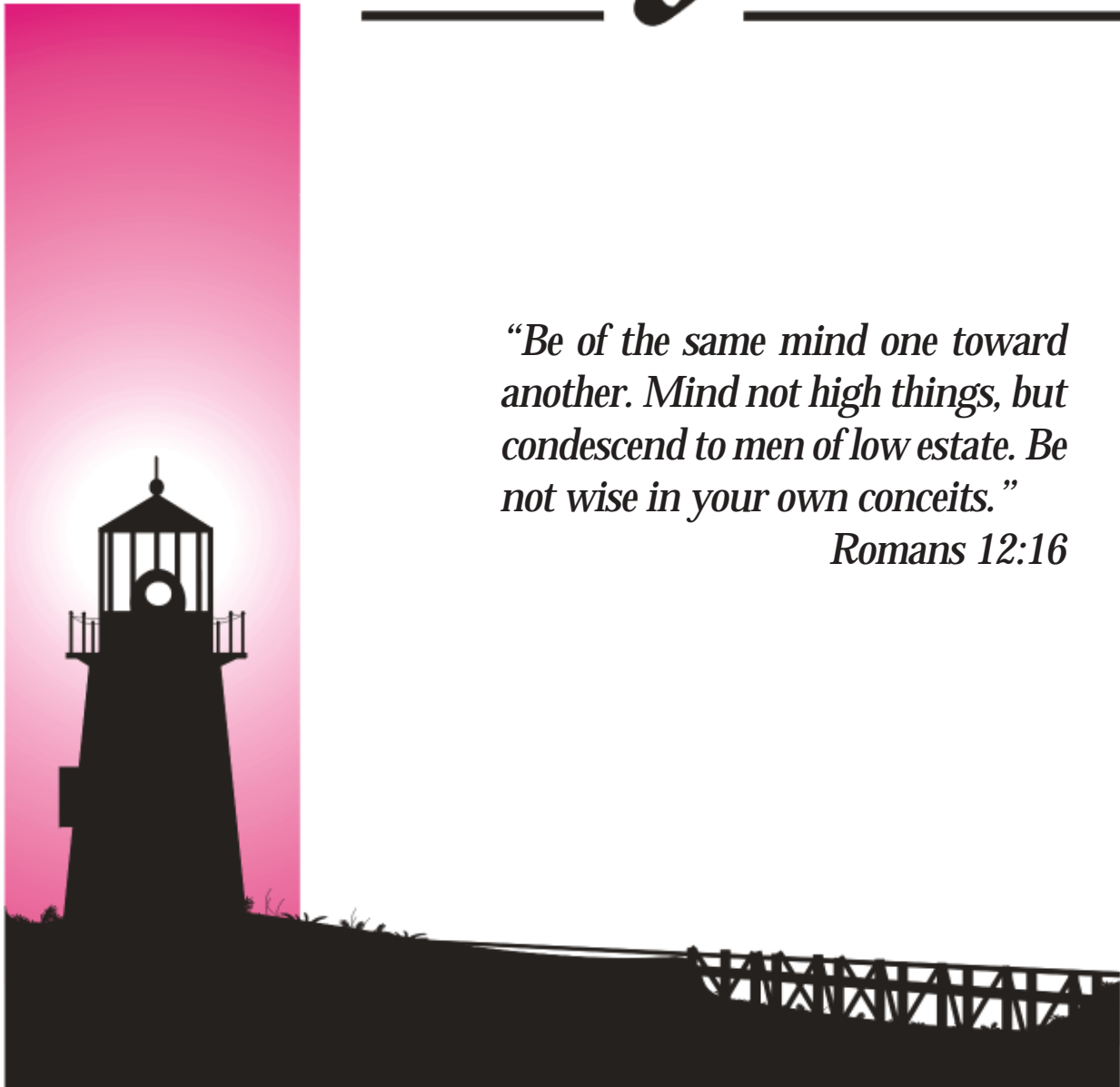


Table of Contents

	EDITORIAL
3	Good Reading for a Cold Winter Day
	FRUITFUL BRANCHES
4	Giving In
	CONSIDER THE CREATION
5	Hidden Life
	STORY TIME
7	When Everything Is New
	PASTOR PROFILE
9	Rev. Allen Brummel
	GEM OF THE MONTH
12	The Traveler
	DEVOTIONAL
13	Watching Daily At My Gates
	MUSIC
17	Christmas Carols
	WHERE WE STAND
18	Arminianism (11): The Saints Assured of Persevering
	OUR YOUNG PEOPLE'S FEDERATION
20	Federation Board Update
22	Study Proverbs This Society Season
	CHURCH HISTORY
24	George M. Ophoff (13): On Common Grace
	LITTLE LIGHTS
27	One Man Against the World (2)
	CHURCH NEWS
	Back Cover

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Good Reading for a Cold Winter Day

by John Huizenga



I*delette: A Novel Based on the Life of Madame John Calvin*, by Edna Gerstner Morgan, PA: Soli Deo Gloria, 1995. (Originally published by Zondervan, 1963) [reviewed by John Huizenga]

Idelette is a delightful little book that opens a new door to the heart of the Reformation. It is a book that keeps its focus on John Calvin's wife, and there is much to learn about her and from her example as a wife. Even so, she opens up a window into John Calvin and his life with her that is fascinating. If the history books or lectures have left you with the view that John Calvin was simply a theologian without a social life, romance, or humor, you need to read this book. Are you dating or married? This book paints a beautiful picture of a marriage grounded in the word of God.

The romantic side of a man who was strictly focused upon God's word comes out often in this book. "When Jean Calvin saw her, her tiny oval face was held high, and her lovely black hair spilled about her shoulders. He closed his Bible and firmly replace it on the sill. Then he held out his arms toward her. And as she walked steadily to him he said very softly, 'I have been reading the fifth chapter of Proverbs. I have found, my dear, one command which I shall not find hard to keep, 'Rejoice with the wife of thy youth.'" Though he longed for eternal life with God, he also learned to enjoy the gifts of life and the beauty of marriage. "Then, too, Jean Calvin loved to revel in the beauty of his wife. His practical friend, Guillaume Farel, had said of *Idelette* that she was honest and very beautiful. Jean had never doubted her honesty, but it was only with the passing of the days that he began truly to see the beauty of his wife" (45). "He had not counted on more than a mutual affection and esteem to make the marriage a success. This deep passion he felt for his beautiful bride was totally unexpected, but nevertheless welcome. Jean Calvin counted it as another evidence of a gracious gift from a benevolent God" (54). "Calvin, always eloquent, outdid himself when declaring his love for her. His words of endearment were like a psalm. They would flow over her, and she found herself caught up in the tide of his devotion" (55).

Calvin was indeed a stern man on the pulpit as well as at home. Having asked his wife if she listened carefully to the sermon, she had to confess that she was fretting about having visitors over for dinner. His daughter tried to appease his growing irritation saying,

"O yes, father," Judith replied hastily when she saw his face. "It was a lovely sermon." *Idelette* winced. Today, even Judith who always sought to please was blundering badly.

"I wasn't aware," said her father sternly, "that the subject of damnation of the wicked could be considered a 'lovely sermon.' While I, a messenger of God, thunder out denunciations my own daughter thinks of my appearance, and my wife," he spluttered, "envisions potatoes!" (112).

Another excerpt reveals a soft side of Calvin and the humor he and his wife enjoyed:

"*Idelette* knocked on the door of the study. Monsieur Calvin was engrossed in manuscripts. His back was stooped. His face smudged with the dust of the ages. His fingers were inky. His eyes looked up impatiently at the interruption. "Yes?" When she did not answer, but stood in the doorway looking steadily at him, he asked impatiently, "Is anything wrong?"

"No, nothing is wrong. But you look so grim. Please wave your wand for me."

Jean Calvin smiled at the biblical allusion. He knew his wife well enough to realize only something important would have kept her standing in the doorway. His impatience vanished. "Enter, Queen Esther. You may have five minutes!"

"I love you, my husband. It has been a revelation tome, and I wanted to waste no time in sharing my news with you. See, I have taken less than my minute!" True to her word, she turned to leave. He reached the door before her, blocked her passage and swept her into his arms" (57).

Permit me one more quote that illustrates a very important ingredient to a healthy and strong marriage: time together. John Calvin said to Idelette one day on a surprise stroll with her by the lake,

"I have been very severely scolded today for my neglect of you."

"How dare anyone interfere in what is our private affair?" she replied.

"This one has every right."

"Who spoke to you about the matter?"

"God."

"What did He say?"

"He spoke as always through His revealed will. I was reading the first chapter of Corinthians, the seventh chapter, and the third verse, '*Que le mari rende a sa femme la bienveillance.*' Let the man render unto his wife true friendship."

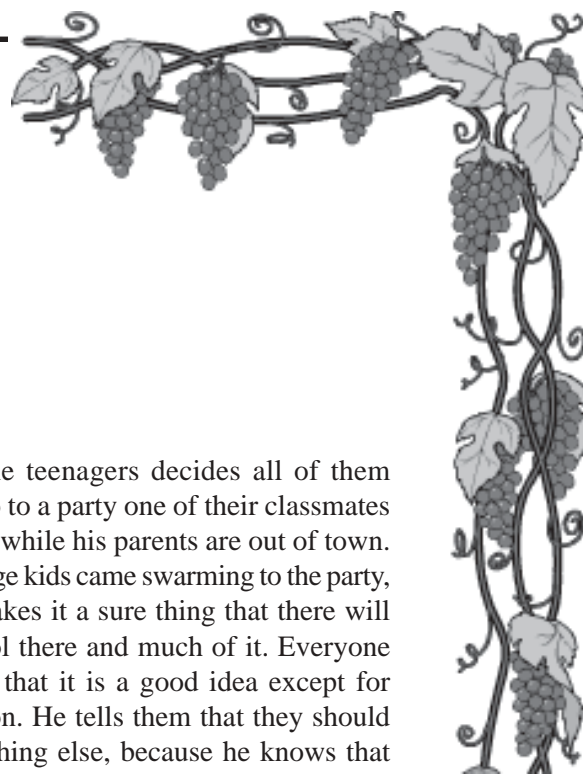
"And what did you reply?"

"I said, 'I will.'"

And so it became no longer an uncommon sight to see Monsieur and Madame Calvin strolling together of an evening. For God had spoken (72).

John Calvin did not sit in an ivory tower, isolated from the sorrows and joys of this life, writing commentaries and theological treatise. He lived in the thick of life: he stared into the deadly eyes of the plague which ravaged Europe, he was involved in the witch hunts and execution of heretics and his family life was gouged by adulterous relationships. He was a husband who loved his wife deeply. He was stern, yet filled with humor and jesting. I highly recommend this book to our readers. ❖

Fruitful Branches



Giving In

by Tyson Boeve

Juveniles and even some adults today do a lot of vile things throughout their lives. Peer pressure is the cause of most of these infractions. Because of this, parents and other grown-ups start to view peer pressure as a detriment to their teenagers. Although some peer pressure can lead to destructive ways, there is also positive peer pressure.

Picture this: a bunch of teenagers get together, not knowing what they should do on a Friday night. Then

one of the teenagers decides all of them should go to a party one of their classmates is having while his parents are out of town. The college kids came swarming to the party, which makes it a sure thing that there will be alcohol there and much of it. Everyone else says that it is a good idea except for one person. He tells them that they should do something else, because he knows that

going to this party is not the right thing to do. In the end, he tags along because he does not want to be seen as the “loser” of the group.

This story is an example of bad peer pressure. No one wants to be considered a “loser,” so he does what everyone else is doing. Teenagers are being pushed into using drugs, smoking, drinking, and stealing; their friends are doing it, and they do not want to be left out. When they get caught by their parents, the common phrase that comes out of their mouth is, “everyone else is doing it, so why can’t I?” This phrase gives parents the idea that their friends are being a bad influence on them and that they should not be hanging out with them.

Peer pressure is not always bad; it can also be used to benefit young people. Picture the same story as before only this time one person wants to go to the party while the others think that it is wrong, and that they should not go. Now peer pressure is forcing the individual not to go to the party because he does not want to lose his group of friends. Now he does not have to worry about getting caught by his parents; when he does go

home he can tell his parents the truth and not lie about where he was. Peer pressure saved him from a lot of sin that he could have committed but did not, all thanks to his friends.

Peer pressure must not be the only source to get one to do things pleasing to God. The fact that God commands us to do good should be enough for us to realize sinning is not what we should be doing. This means that going to parties, doing drugs, and other things are not the right path for us to be taking. Even though our friends think it is cool to party, we should remember that God commands us to do otherwise even if it means losing some close friends.

Peer pressure must be looked at from both sides, and we should not just look at the negative aspect of it. Without positive peer pressure, many teenagers could be living a totally different lifestyle. ❖

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

Consider the Creation

When I In Awesome Wonder...

Michigan’s Golden Coast

Hidden Life

by Deane Wassink

What do you see when you look out at the snow-covered ground in the winter months? Does it appear dead to you? A frozen ice cube of inactivity and death? I will admit that, during the month of March, when I am eagerly awaiting the glorious explosion of life in the spring, the winter landscape does appear barren and dead. However, nothing could be further from the truth.

Many, many things are happening in the creation, if we just put on our coats and quietly take the time to notice.

Break off the tip of a branch on the maple tree outside your window. As soon as we start to get the freeze thaw cycle of late winter you will see sap icicles forming whenever it freezes at night. Not only can this pro-

duce maple syrup for our pancakes, but it also causes the buds to swell as the leaves begin to form inside.

Carefully pull the snow away from the base of a dead tree in the forest to uncover the moss, dead leaves and debris mixed on the forest soil. You will find that it is teeming with life. It is known as the subnivian environment. Often, the snow forms a bit of an open air pocket where it is easier for organisms to live. The cover of snow keeps the temperature stable around the freezing point. Certain fungi and molds continue to break down the organic matter and dead organisms that are buried beneath the snow. Insects, spiders and mites feed on each other and on the insects that are in cocoons or that are dormant.

The mice and short tailed voles are adept at using

these open pockets as part of their intricate trail system that brings them to the seed and insects they eat as food, as well as protecting them from the hungry predators that attack them when they run across the surface. I am always amazed at the number of these trails I see when the snow melts just right to expose them before the rest of the snow is gone. Also, I get frustrated that they often eat the roots and eyes off my favorite perennials so that there is nothing but an empty pocket in the ground where my plant was the year before.

Study the tracks that the winter creatures leave. When we walk in the woods or ride in the sleigh behind our mules, we often see the signs of fascinating events that have occurred. The tracks of the weasel or shrew reveal that they have been going in and out of the mouse trails or chipmunk dens hunting for food. Tracks and wing prints in the snow with bits of fur or feathers show where a hawk or an owl has caught a bird or a rabbit for its dinner. Tracks reveal that even beneath the snow small animals are not completely protected from the larger predators. Fox and coyotes hunt mice by sound, breaking through the crust with their paws to trap the victim underneath. I have read that the fearsome gray owls can hear a vole under the snow from thirty yards away. They swoop above the spot on silent wings, punch through the crusted snow with fisted claws and snatch the unsuspecting vole out of its “protecting” burrow. (I have had the privilege of holding several of these amazing predators through the years—but, that is another story.)

We have enjoyed following the deer or turkey trails through the woods and fields to see where they have been going and what they have been feeding on. Sometimes our dogs will chase the animal out of hiding for us to get a better look. That might be the only way to see a ruffed grouse that has burrowed under the biggest and thickest spruce for protection from weather and predators.

Wintertime is often the best time of year to observe many of the area birds as they come to the bird feeders to eat the banquet that we have set out for them. Out in the woods you can use your ears to pinpoint the location of woodpeckers. If you wait quietly, you can see them circle a tree, looking for food in the cracks of the bark. In a nearby stream, where the water movement keeps it from freezing in even the coldest weather, flocks of ducks and geese congregate for food and protection. I am told that a heated birdbath is a real draw for birds in the winter.

Go on, get out of your easy chair and warm house. Put on your outdoor clothes and check out the wonders that God has created in the winter. You will be healthier for it, and, your heart will be filled with amazement at His handiwork.

Oftentimes we can also be so blind to spiritual life that exists in His church, among fellow saints. We are often looking for something that is dazzling or noisy or earth shaking. Often God works beneath the surface to quietly build His church and gather His people. It certainly is not normally through the means of events that are of great newsworthy proportions. It is through the wonder of the preaching of the Word of the gospel from week to week, Sunday after Sunday, and through the quiet witness of His people to fellow sinners, that God saves and builds His church. We mustn't look for or be taken in by great numbers, loud music, or claims of signs and wonders. We should look beneath the surface of external things to see the life of the Spirit and the faithfulness of the preaching in the church. Of course, if there is a frigid exterior and lack of hospitality and love we must question whether there is life within. Lord, help us to see Thy power and work in the creation, and even more, in the church, among Thy saints.

Lost Lamb

*Sad and lonely though I be,
The Lord my shepherd cares for me.*

*The snow may fall, the winds may blow,
The Lord shall find me this I know.*

*When lost, alone, and bruised in the wild,
I hear my shepherd, “Come my child.”*

*My soul o'erwhelmed by death's dark vale,
Calmed by His gentle, “All is well.”*

*He will feed and bed this little lamb,
Forgiveness and hope fed by His hand.*

*When finally at peace I'm laid to rest,
In His warm white robes will I be dressed. ❖*

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

When Everything Is New

by J. P. de Klerk

Loes had never expected this to happen, some years ago. But now she walked here, amazed, looking around, enjoying the view. Plenty of land and hills, trees, flowers, plants and grass everywhere. No traffic, no people who were in a hurry, but all quiet and peaceful, that lovely, late Sunday afternoon.

Loes was happy. Bas, her husband, snatched a little sleep at home. In the morning they had been to church for the first time in New Zealand, an hour's drive from here to the city. That church was in fact a small Reformed fellowship, founded by two active ministers in a shed behind a shop. There were not many members because on the South Island the distances between the villages were great, the hills and mountains numerous, and in the winter season it often snowed, hailed or froze. But the soil was very fruitful and excellent for all kinds of agricultural produce.

Loes was expecting. Bas was already preparing the house for it. With the help of two students who wanted to make some money during the holidays, he had renovated the place as much as possible. They would also help him with bringing the land under cultivation, which was quite a job to do.

Bas and she married in The Netherlands several months before their departure. Bas' father had strongly recommended them to emigrate, because there were too many problems to overcome at the farm. Each time the crops were heavier but the income was lower because of the bureaucratic formalities, rules, restrictions and competition. There was not much of a future anymore for a young farmer like Bas...

Loes saw the new and the unknown. She had not had the time to be so relaxed to take it all in and thank God for it from the bottom of her heart. Would the rabbits, the field mice, the hedgehogs and the squirrels have noticed her presence? She saw fernbirds, finches, starlings and silvereyes chasing insects and picking currents. Tomorrow Bas would again work at the fields behind her with his tractor, to plough or to sow.



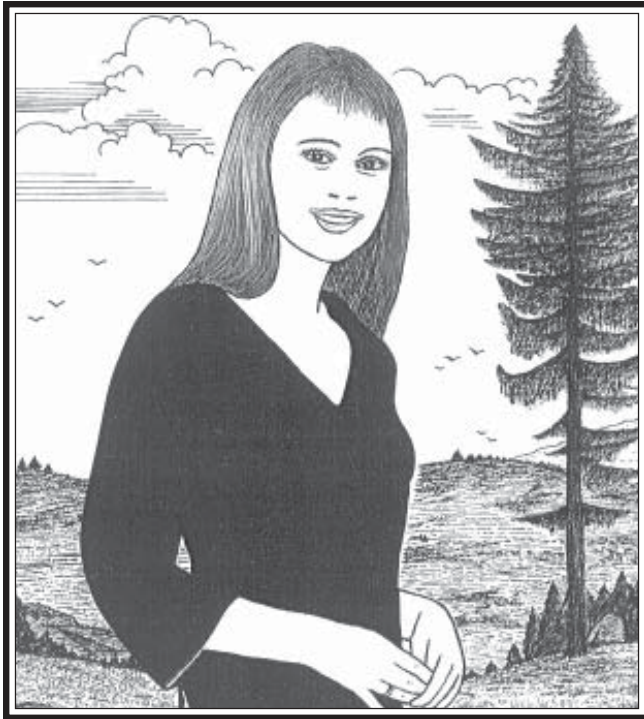
Loes was originally not directly involved with farm work, but more in the kitchen because there had to be food on the table for the family and the laborers of her father. She had eight younger brothers and sisters. There were cows, pigs and chickens. In a fenced in piece of land were the fruit trees.

Now in New Zealand they would yet have to plant them, together with the installation of a big irrigation system; there was no river in this area. The family of Bas van Leeuwen had never had a problem with that, because they could get plenty of water from the river Waal. Also the father of Loes Beukels had enough for his apple trees and bushes with berries. The city of Tiel was founded eleven centuries ago and it was amazing that the center with old buildings and small canals was spared, because Tiel had suffered several wars and occupations.

Where Loes was now, all was different, on the South Island, on the other side of the world; a time difference of twelve hours, so it was in Tiel very early in the morning.

They had found a nice spot and they intended to add a big living room to the bungalow they had gotten. God was good to them.

They had already a flock of sheep, which was allowed temporarily to graze at the grassland of a kind neighbor. For them it would be fun filling up with fresh



young grass, as Loes liked eating fruit straight from the tree. Where she was standing, there lived about two thousand years ago Moriori's, she was told, who came from somewhere in South America, but several centuries later the Maori's had come, from islands in the Pacific, and drove them away. The last Moriori died in 1933 at the Chatham Islands, and his name was Tommy Solomon.

It was nearly summertime in New Zealand, where the seasons were exactly opposite those in Europe. She watched a few clouds scud across the sky; what a tranquility. Tuis passed by (a very big kind of pigeon with two white balls hanging under its chin) who had probably eaten honey from the flowers of a protea under the wide expanse of the blue sky. Blackbirds were feeding their young. A missel thrush sang away to his heart's content. Loes wondered would she also be so jubilant in nine months time. Her mother had given her a lot of wise advice, to be prepared and look forward to it with joy.

They would eat a simple meal this Sunday. Yesterday Bas had bought some tins with meat, vegetables and potatoes in the village further on; there was only one small shop, where they sold everything, from bottled milk, bread and potatoes to postage stamps. They got their own mailbox with a key, because the postman did not bring it to their doorstep. Loes had a fridge with a freezer on top of it, to keep things all right for consumption. She became quickly used to it. It was part of the friendly atmosphere, she found out...

They had not brought much with them from The Netherlands. In the first place, they did not yet have much, like furniture, paintings or carpets. In the second place, what they had was rather old. (They were not allowed to bring things into the country which could harbor vermin, including boxes which had been used for eggs or poultry.) They had put together the savings they had, and the fathers from both sides had doubled that amount from their nest eggs. A friend of Bas, who was an employee of a travel bureau had sought out for them what was the most economic way to reach their destination, via Wellington and Christchurch.

In New Zealand, almost everybody had a car, often rather old, but following the rules of the law, kept in good condition, every half year checked by a garage-man who gave a sticker for the front window, with a date. If you did not have that and the traffic police saw it, you had to pay a high fine and you could lose your driving license. Bas had quickly bought a small truck which was well looked after. Loes had brought her bike with her, but had not yet used it.

Their first outing in the neighborhood was a visit to a deacon of the church with his family. He and his wife were about their age. Loes had looked with mollification at their sleeping children. The Websters lived about fifteen minutes drive from their place in a brand new bungalow. Jim Webster made the walls himself of naturally sawn bricks of a yellowish-brown color. He said with a smile that he was quite willing to do that once for the Van Leeuwens, but he warned them that the bricks were expensive. Meanwhile his wife, Janet, showed them some pottery she had made, and some old Christian books for the children she had carefully restored.

The Websters had come from Palmerston North, on the North Island, where Jim's father was a lawyer. Janet was the daughter of immigrants from Scotland who lived in Foxton, at the end of the Manawatu River, which went through Palmerston North. They both attended Queen Elisabeth College there, where they got to know each other. Jim told them that they had decided to give their children home schooling (the government gave a subsidy for that). The parents would be responsible for looking after the exam papers and send them by mail to a correspondence address. The children could get official diplomas. The main thing was, you could give them a Christian education without the influence of heathen ideas, alcohol and drugs. "We believe it is worth the time and effort," said Janet.

Bas agreed, in this time and age, where they were, there was no better solution for the problems they were

facing. “We cannot do more than we are able, and we ask the Lord for guidance for Loes and me. At the moment we look forward to the end of the first nine months.” They drank tea and enjoyed a big piece of a beautiful cake Janet had made. She explained that making cakes themselves was kind of a New Zealand tradition in the outback.

Jim was an accountant by profession and had a lot of work to do for the farmers; some of them had a lot of sheep on the hills, looked after by men on horses. He told Bas about the rules he would have to keep in mind,

when his farm would become bigger. He advised him also to become a member of the Christian Heritage Party of New Zealand, so that he would remain informed about developments in the government. Loes listened with interest and said: “It is all yet so new for us.” Bas made some notices in a notebook he always had in his pocket “We trust God,” he said. ❖

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

Pastor Profile

Rev. Allen Brummel

edited by Kris Moelker

I was born on December 26, 1968, in the hospital at Pipestone, Minnesota just after a severe blizzard left behind snow piles that were higher than the telephone wires. Thankfully, my parents, Allen and Sharon Brummel who are members of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Edgerton, Minnesota, were able to get to and from the hospital without difficulty. I am the oldest of five children. My siblings are Rev. Nathan (Paula) Brummel, Jodi (Jeff) Baker, Shari (Randy) Vaalburg, and Tiffany (Eric) Van Baren.

I grew up in Edgerton, Minnesota, just across the street from the church and one block east of our Free Christian School. Our family’s business, Brummel’s Sewing and Shoes, was just three blocks west.

I attended the Free Christian School, our Protestant Reformed grade school in Edgerton, Minnesota, which was a two-room school. I was the smartest student in my class, but that was not difficult seeing I was the only student in my class through ninth grade. After graduating from ninth grade, I faced a major transition now hav-



ing 40 students in my class at Southwest Christian High School, the Christian Reformed high school in Edgerton. After graduating from high school, I went on to Dordt College in Sioux Center, Iowa, which was just an hour south of home. I lived on campus, but made regular trips back home to work on weekends. I was able to finish my four years of pre-seminary studies at Dordt because during that time the synod of our churches discontinued the pre-seminary program.

It was during my years in high school that I began to feel God’s hand leading me to the ministry. The response of those around me was encouraging, but very low key. I never felt any pressure or any high expecta-

tations from others. I did not so much desire the ministry and did not think that I had the necessary gifts for the work. Although I contacted the seminary while in high school and began taking the necessary courses to prepare for seminary, my heart was not fully in it and I must confess that I resisted the call. I loved to read and loved the truth for which our churches stood. But I found phys-

ics, chemistry, and biology much more appealing than history, philosophy, Greek, Dutch, Latin and English grammar. I enjoyed fixing sewing machines and small appliances, repairing shoes and tarps, working outside doing cement work and caring for livestock during my high school, college and seminary summers and, in some ways, learned more during the summer months than in the classroom. The life of a stock farmer raising hogs, cattle and maybe some purebred dogs, as well as doing construction work on the side, looked appealing to me. Or, at the very least, it seemed appealing to keep the sewing machine business and the shoe store in the family. But God increasingly caused the burden of the ministry to weigh heavier on me and I continued preparing for the pastorate with a special interest in the work of missions.

I still enjoy getting my hands dirty once in a while, but I don't miss trying to keeping track of the fluctuating prices of feeder pigs and pork bellies.

After my first year of seminary, on August 14, 1992, I married Crysta Bonestroo, the daughter of Howard and LaJean Bonestroo, from our Doon, Iowa, Protestant Reformed Church. Although we knew of each other from combined chapels between our Protestant Reformed schools, we met at Dordt College while she was in her first year preparing for a degree in special education and I was in my last year. God has blessed our marriage richly as we have grown closer to God and He has used us for the sanctification of one another. In our eleven years of marriage God has entrusted us with seven children—Dean (10), Allyn (8), Ethan (7), Brandyn (5), Steven (3), Crystal (2), and Darren (6 months). From the beginning, Crysta was a great source of strength and support in my studies. She was a farm girl who loved her horses and found rural life very appealing, but she realized that the call to the ministry was an important calling that could not be resisted. Her selfless nature and whole-hearted devotion to her family and friends has been a great blessing to me and to our children as well as to the congregations we have served.

The most memorable event of my years in seminary would have to be when the four of us (now Rev. Doug Kuiper, Rev. David Higgs, Rev. Chris Connors, and myself) presented our exegesis to the professor on I Thessalonians 5:19; "Quench not the Spirit." Once we were finished, there was a long silence, and then the professor gave us a lecture that introduced us to a new heresy that we had just been guilty of promoting. He made very clear that he did not want to have to sit at a heresy trial

for one of his students in the future. We did that exegesis over, but I don't think I'll preach on that text for a while yet.

Thankfully, God developed the gifts necessary for the ministry and caused me to grow in my desire for that work. In my last year of seminary, the churches began something new with a six month internship. The faculty opened the door for me to serve my internship in Singapore under Rev. Kortering. My wife, six-month-old son Dean, and I were introduced first-hand to life in a different culture. I was able to join the first delegation to Myanmar and labored beside an experienced elder teaching classes to some office bearers in those churches. The experience confirmed a burden for missions, but God in His wisdom has guided me differently until now. Upon graduation from seminary, I moved to Edgerton, Minnesota, with my expectant wife and oldest son in order to fill their pulpit until they would get a minister or I would receive a call. In God's good providence, the summer went well and Edgerton ended up surprising me with a call to be their pastor. I accepted the call in the fall of 1995. The first baptism that I administered in Edgerton was to my second son.

Thankfully, our stay in Edgerton proved false the proverb: "No prophet is accepted in his own country." Our years in Edgerton were too short from an earthly perspective. Not only was the Word preached well received, but we enjoyed a privilege few ministers experience in that we lived across the street from my family and from my grandmother, and I served in consistory with my father and uncle. My wife got to know and love my parents and they got to know my family very well. My father and Aunt Judy, as Emergency Medical Technicians, were able to help the night when our third child, Ethan, was born at home. I served as Edgerton's pastor until the summer of 1998, when I accepted the call to be pastor of our South Holland congregation where I currently serve. A highlight of our stay in South Holland has been my sister Tiffany and Crysta's sister Cassie moving in with us and each eventually marrying men from our church and living in the area. When a daughter congregation, Cornerstone Protestant Reformed Church, was formed from South Holland in 1999, my brother Nathan received the call to serve as their pastor. Again, we are blessed with family nearby and in the church.

The elders that God gave me in Edgerton and in South Holland were and continue to be a great blessing of God to me as a young pastor. God gives elders to ministers as precious gifts for the development of their

gifts and abilities. My goal is to be the best pastor that I can be with the gifts that God has given me. God has given me very good elders to whom I give credit for helping me attain that goal.

One of the most rewarding things as a minister to witness in the life of the church is the strength of God's grace in preserving His children in times of trial and giving them such a beautiful witness. I marvel when I see the peace and the contentment that God gives to those who face serious surgery or even death. God's covenant faithfulness and His promises to His children are not hollow promises, but are very precious. I find a great reward in bringing the promises of God to His people in their need, and in preaching Christ crucified from the pulpit and in the catechism room.

Often the most memorable experiences in teaching children are the questions that are raised. There are always the challenging questions like that of one young person: "What is circumcision?" One time I tried a simple response: "the cutting off of the foreskin," but did not expect the response of one student: "I know what that is. It happened to my sister last week when she lost the skin from the tip of her finger." Further explanation became necessary to my chagrin. Or, the heart-breaking sincerity of a little first grader when we were talking about heaven and hell: "Why can't everyone go to heaven?" he said with tears running down his cheeks.

Since I have been in the ministry, there has been a lot of controversy that has surfaced within the meetings of Classis West. Our agendas have been lengthy, but God has guided us through it and we must be thankful that the issues that concern God's people are being addressed and not simply being swept under the rug. We are reminded through such controversy that God is Lord of His church and the gates of hell will not prevail against her.

While I was growing up, I enjoyed fishing, hunting, reading and fixing almost any appliance that was not working. I have tried to maintain those hobbies, especially making time for reading. When opportunity arises, I do some fishing and occasionally climb back into a tree stand with my bow and arrows in pursuit of a white tail deer for the freezer. Unfortunately, I now have far more pressure on me as seven little expectant faces will be waiting for me in the window when I get home to see if I have anything to show them. During the past year, my bow and arrows have been most helpful in protecting our pet rabbits from wild dogs that roam into the area looking for an easy lunch.

There are always a lot of pressures to walk in sin and to live for the things of this earth. I experienced them in my youth and continue to fight against them today. Our young people, as well as all of us, need to be reminded that we are pilgrims and strangers on this earth. We must seek the things of God's Kingdom by spending time in His Word and in prayer. In the face of temptation, Jesus Christ is our sympathetic High Priest and He alone is the source of our strength.

I thank God for the privilege He has given me to be His servant, and I pray for the grace to be found faithful unto the end. God has given me a wonderful eight years in the ministry, and I pray that He will be pleased to give me continued growth so that I might continue to be used by Him for the good of His church. ❖

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

The Reader Asks

Question Request

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

Please send your question to:

Rev. James Laning

1550 Ferndale S.W.

Walker, MI 49544

E-mail: jlaning@msn.com

The Traveler

O traveler, where are you going?
 You seem so intent on your way,
 As if nothing on earth will detain you;
 Are you sure you must get there today?

*F*rom the traveler's lips hear the answer:
 I'm intent on my path 'cause I know
 That the One Whom I love is awaiting—
 He went first; now I'm longing to go.

O traveler, stop at this roadhouse—
 They have dainties, good ale, a soft bed;
 You'll wear yourself out as you're pacing—
 Come, find rest and refreshment instead.

*T*he refreshment of earth doesn't tempt me
 For I'm going to a far better land;
 The delights of that place have no equal,
 It's a glory earth can't understand.

O traveler, linger to play here—
 The amusements will thrill you, I'm sure,
 Just be carefree and fun-loving with us—
 All these pleasures are made to allure.

*T*he amusements you speak of are garish,
 They are cheap, they are tawdry as well,
 They would never equip me for heaven
 But are found on the pathway to hell.

O traveler, why are you wearing
 Those rags—there are garments so fair—
 You, really could look quite attractive
 In those modern designs over there.

*W*hy these rags? that is all I can bring there—
 But you see, I won't need earthly ration.
 Christ's righteousness clothes all His people—
 We'll don the white robes of salvation!

*L*et us follow this traveler's example,
 Our lives so intent on our goal
 That enticements of earth won't allure us;
 May we crave heaven's bliss for our soul.

by Thelma Westra

Watching Daily At My Gates

By Chester Hunter

January 1 Read John 9:23-29

As we come to the beginning of a new year, we must answer the question. "Are we ready to face those who question our faith?" This was the question of the recently healed blind man; this is the question that Christians will more and more face in the last days. The man was badgered to deny that Jesus was God. We, too, will be badgered to deny Jesus and give the glory that belongs to Him to someone else. Are we ready to take a stand? Have we prepared ourselves by studying God's word? We have the promise that the Holy Spirit will teach us what to say, but He will only use the Word of God. We must know that Word in order to be able to understand what the Spirit is saying to us. Let us make it our resolve to know the Scriptures more and more each day. Sing Psalter 333.

January 2 Read John 9:30-34

Are we ready to be cast out? Are we willing to be cast out? Young people, are you prepared to be ostracized by those around you because of your willingness to profess your faith and to live out of that faith? This was the decision of the blind man. He had opportunity to denounce Christ and to "save" himself. He did not take that opportunity. He was willing to incur the wrath of the Pharisees of the Sanhedrin and was cast out of the synagogue for his confession. Are we ready to make that stand? Parents, are you teaching your children to take that stand by both your words and deeds? Being cast out of an earthly institution is not the worse thing that can happen to us. To be barred from heaven is. Sing Psalter 103.

January 3 Read John 9:35-41

Jesus always seeks out those who need him in their darkest hour. This blind man had been alienated from his parents, neighbors, and the church. It looked like all was against him. But Jesus found him, encouraged him, and gave him the faith to believe. We can have the same comfort. There is nothing on this earth which can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. This is the testimony of Paul in Romans 8, and this can be our testimony as well. Christ will find His sheep and bring to them utmost comfort. Let us spend part of each day seeking Him in His Word and in prayer. Let us teach our children and young people to do that as well. Let us say, "I believe," and let us worship the Christ. Sing Psalter 306.

January 4 Read John 10:1-10

Here we hear Jesus speaking to the Jews in language that they could easily understand. They knew about sheep and the care of them. They knew about the dangers that sheep faced

at the hands of evil men. These pictures are not hard for us to understand. We are God's sheep. He cares for us just like any earthly farmer would care for his sheep. There are evil men in this life who are working for their master, Satan, and wish to harm us. As we consider these verses of John 10 let us take care to understand what Jesus is saying about His church. Let us follow the one Shepherd Whose way is life. Sing 342.

January 5 Read John 10:1-10

Yesterday we introduced this passage of Scripture. Today let us look more closely at it. There is but one way into God's sheep fold. That is the way outlined for us in His Word. To try to enter heaven in any other way will bring disaster upon us. Let us hear the word of the Shepherd. Let us study His Word in order that we can recognize His voice. If we study some other way, we will not hear His voice and will not be led into the safe confines of the fold. Jesus is the only door to everlasting life. His way is the only way to salvation. We must seek that way and enter in at that way. Sing Psalter 336.

January 6 Read John 10:11-18

In verse eleven we have one of those precious "I am's" of Christ. Our littlest children can learn Psalm 23 and understand what it means. They can understand the picture of Jesus as the shepherd. Young people, you should not only understand the picture but be living the picture. We must know that as sheep we need a shepherd. We can not live on this earth without one. To rebel against our Shepherd will surely bring disaster for us. Let us stop and hear the Shepherd's voice, let us heed that voice, and let us follow that voice. Sing Psalter 53.

January 7 Read John 10:19-29

In the midst of the seeming ugliness of these verses comes the shining ray of the doctrine of the perseverance or preservation of the saints. We are kept by Jesus and His Father. Do you feel the comfort that this affords to us people of God? Do you go to sleep knowing that God will keep you through the night and will be with you in the day to come? Do you go forth to work knowing that whatever may happen will work for your good? Young people, this should give to you comfort at school especially if you attend a school where God's name is not spoken highly of. Let us live our lives kept in the comfort that God will care for us at all times. Sing Psalter 5.

January 8 Read John 10:30-42

The refusal to believe that Jesus is God has been evident throughout most of the new dispensation. The Pharisees did not believe it. The Nicene Creed was written against Arius

and his refusal to believe that Jesus was God. This is one of the fundamental errors of Islam. Over against that error we have verse 30. "I and my Father are one." This is comforting, people of God. This is comforting because it gives to us peace as we read about the redemptive work of Christ for us. We know that He did not fail upon the cross. We can know this personally and can be assured of it because Jesus is God. Let us believe even as some in His day believed. Sing Psalter 4.

January 9 Read John 11:1-5

In this significant chapter of John we see both Jesus' human nature and His divine nature. We can even see both in verse 5. Jesus loved these sisters and brother. He loved them personally and enjoyed the companionship and hospitality that they showed to Him and would show to Him in His time of trial. He also loved them as His sheep. This is the only love that we must covet! We must want the love of Jesus and seek for that love by doing His commandments. We must reflect that love as we are companionable and hospitable to those around us. Jesus gives to us many opportunities to do this. Let us not waste those opportunities, rather let us make use of them to glorify God. Sing Psalter 24.

January 10 Read John 11:6-10

Jesus will now use the occasion of Lazarus's death to teach His disciples about the heavenly kingdom. It does not make much of an impression now but it will after Jesus goes into heaven. The disciples were still looking for an earthly kingdom. They wanted to protect Jesus from all harm in order that He could be king. Jesus had to show them and us that His kingdom is not of this world. We need this instruction because there are many who would want us to put our efforts into making this world a place that Christ would be pleased to dwell. We must care for our earth, of that there is no doubt. But our care is not to make it the place of the future kingdom. We are pilgrims here looking for our home which will be in heaven. This must be our focus in this life. The disciples had to learn this and we must not forget it. Sing Psalter 106.

January 11 Read John 11:11-16

Sometimes God must place before us some hard thing in order that we believe. This was the way it was with the disciples. Lazarus had to die and had to be raised again in order that the disciples might believe on the truth of Christ's resurrection. Thomas was not alone in his pessimism. The other disciples, too, thought that going to Jerusalem would bring at least Jesus' death if not theirs. We, too, do not seem to understand the hard way that Jesus puts before us. We ask, "Why, God?" We really ask this in unbelief. We do not believe that the way He leads us is really good for us. We think we can set the plan for our lives in a better way. Let us not fall into the disciples' error, but rather let us trust in God to lead us in the good way. Let us believe. Sing Psalter 202.

January 12 Read John 11:17-27

Jesus would meet each of the family members. In meeting each of them He would teach them and us how we must be-

lieve. Practical Martha had a lesson to learn. She had to learn that she could not order life her way. She had to mourn the loss of her brother so that she could confess that Jesus was the Christ. She knew the doctrine of the resurrection, but she had to be shown that she did not make the schedule. She had to learn that it was God who ordered all things. Some of us are like Martha. We want everything to fall into order around our time schedule. We even want God to follow that schedule. Like Martha we have to learn to follow His time. Sing Psalter 366.

January 13 Read John 11:28-35

In the shortest verse of the Bible we again see both Jesus' human and divine nature. We will look at the divine nature tomorrow. Mary was off privately mourning her brother's death. She was seeking comfort and not finding it in herself. Jesus had to bring her to Him and give to her the comfort she needed. He did not do this in a cold theological manner. No, her elder brother wept with her and for her. Jesus saw her weakness and, weeping for her, went to help her. Some of us are like Mary. We need the comfort that only Jesus can afford. Like Mary we need Him to seek for us. It is impossible for us to go to Him in our strength. In fact by nature we cannot go to Him and will not go to Him. But because He loves us he comes to us and draws us near to Him. What a beautiful comfort that affords us in all trials and sufferings! Sing Psalter 361.

January 14 Read John 11:33-38

Jesus wept because He saw the Jew's unbelief in their hearts. They mocked Him when He said He was the Son of God and let Lazarus die and therefore brought much pain into this family's life. Jesus saw them as miserable comforters for Mary and Martha. Oh, they had tears running down their faces, but their hearts were hard. Jesus knew that some of these people would be hurling open insults at Him as He would hang on the cross. Jesus knew this and wept because these Jews had been given much and had returned little. Let us not be so hard on the Jews. Let us examine our own hearts. Have we been given much? The answer is yes. How do we react toward God in time of trial? Let us go to Him and say Thy way and only Thy way O Lord my strength and redeemer. Sing Psalter 389:1, 4 & 6.

January 15 Read John 11:39-46

Jesus had told Martha that He was the resurrection and the life. Now by raising Lazarus from the dead He visibly shows to her and the others the truth of that statement. Lazarus's resurrection was a picture of many things. First of all, it is a picture of the spiritual resurrection that those who are dead in sin receive by grace through faith. Secondly, it is a picture of Jesus' own resurrection which will be proof to us of our resurrection. Finally, it is a picture of our final resurrection in the new heavens and earth. Do you believe, people of God? There were two reactions to this resurrection. Some believed;

others in wicked unbelief went to inform the Sanhedrin of the goings on in Bethany. What about us? Sing Psalter 29.

January 16 Read John 11:47-57

The Sanhedrin was being backed up against a wall. Their popularity was waning fast. If they killed Him, some of the people would revolt. If they let Him alone, their power would be eroded and the Romans would remove them. Against these wicked thoughts Caiaphas directed by God made a startling prophecy. He did not think it was so startling. He did not think it was a prophecy. He wickedly proposed that they find Jesus and secretly put Him to death. But God meant it differently. This was a very accurate prophesy of what Jesus' death means to His church. He died so that we may live. Now the council wanted to seek the right time. As we know all time is in God's hand. He would direct His Son's death for His own purpose and glory. Sing Psalter 47:1-5.

January 17 Read John 12:1-11

Are we greedy like Judas or loving like Mary? Are we hypocritical like Judas or do we openly show friendship to God's people like Lazarus and Martha. Jesus knows that His time is coming. He takes this opportunity to show His disciples that His time was coming. What effect did this have on the council? They hated Him the more. What about God's people? They believed. What about us? In which camp do we fall? As we continue our study about Jesus' final days on this earth let us see what it means for us in our daily lives. Sing Psalter 204.

January 18 Read John 12:12-19

As Jesus' final days on this earth came to pass, we still see Him obeying His Father and fulfilling the Old Testament Scriptures. The so-called triumphal entry was prophesied both in Psalms and in the prophets. There were many that day who cried "Hosanna" who in a week's time would cry "Crucify Him." Jesus will be making *the* triumphal entry at the end of time. How are we preparing to see Him? Are we eagerly watching the signs of the times? Or are we trying to produce a heaven on earth? Christ was entering Jerusalem on His way to death so that we may live. Let us cry Hosanna! Sing Psalter 320.

January 19 Read John 12:20-28

As the day for Jesus' crucifixion grew closer He more and more plainly began to teach those around Him the manner of His death and the fact of His resurrection. The disciples were obviously puzzled by all that He said and by all that was happening around Him. But Jesus was using each incident to teach them so that they would be able to teach and preach after His ascension. We, too, must learn from this and prepare ourselves for Jesus' second coming. We like the disciples would like to arrange matters to our own liking. Even as Jesus showed His willingness to let His Father's name be glorified by the Father's way so must we. Sing Psalter 86.

January 20 Read John 12:29-41

On this final day in the temple Jesus is first of all making it clear about the manner of His dying. Secondly, He is carrying out His Father's will in that His hour is now come. Each of these statements inflamed the Sanhedrin more and more. While they were looking for a way to kill Him secretly, He was making it necessary that the Scriptures be fulfilled in His death. Each time that He reminded them of Old Testament words which pointed directly to Him, hatred against Him must have boiled up more and more. Once again we must be admonished to know the Scriptures and to believe the Scriptures concerning Christ. Sing Psalter 185:1-5.

January 21 Read John 12:42-50

People of God, do you love the praise of men better than the praise of God? Young people, do you hide who you are so that you are not mocked by those around you? If Jesus would have followed those sentiments, there would have been no salvation for us. Think about that for a minute. Jesus said the very things that would eventually bring about His death. He equated Himself with the Father. That was the charge which brought about His death. Can we confess His name even when it may bring us hardship? Let us go the cross and ask for forgiveness for the sin of failing to confess God before men. Then let us pray for the grace to confess Christ before men. Sing Psalter 185:6-9.

January 22 Read John 13:1-11

In washing the disciples' feet Jesus performed the duty of the lowest household slave or servant in Israel. Washing feet was a sign of hospitality in dry dusty Judea. In washing the disciples feet Jesus was showing them and us that we must wash each other's feet. We must be willing to take upon ourselves the most menial tasks to help those around us. Washing each other's feet shows our love toward them. Washing feet may be unpleasant at times, but it must be done. Each of us must look for ways to serve our fellow Christians around us. There is no praise in washing feet but the praise of God. What more do we need? Sing Psalter 305:1-5.

January 23 Read John 13:12-21

As the hours grew closer to His death, Jesus began to set in motion the way of that death. It was now time to identify His betrayer. Judas had been with the disciples in body throughout Jesus' time on this earth but he had not been with them in spirit. He had been the treasurer of the group, but he was a thief. When the Sanhedrin gave notice that they would reward anyone who would help them kill Jesus, he began to make plans. But now Jesus forces his hand. Even though the Sanhedrin did not want the deed done during the Passover feast, Jesus' hour had come. It was time to sacrifice the final Passover so that His people would be enabled to enter the heavenly Canaan. Thanks be to God that the way of our salvation was ordained by Him and not by us. For if it was not God's way there would be no way at all. Sing Psalter 186.

January 24 Read John 13:22-30

As Jesus was putting in motion events connected with His death, He was also ushering in the church of the New Dispensation. He was going to institute the sacrament of the Lord's Supper as a sign of His death. But to do that He had to purify the band of disciples as they represented that church. Judas had to be excused in order that the table of the Lord was not profaned. This shows us the necessity of guarding the table today. The elders have been given this task and must carry it out diligently. Each time that we celebrate Communion, let us look back at the first Lord's Supper for instruction in doing it properly. Only in the proper administration of the sacraments will the church and we be blessed. Sing Psalter 203.

January 25 Read John 13:31-38

The end of this chapter and the verses of the next few chapters are replete with instruction to the church of today. We need to study these words of Scripture often to learn how we must behave in the church. Jesus commands us that we love one another. He tells us that we must make this the focus of our lives. This love must be a reflection of His love for us. This love must not be to gain praise of men. This love must not be a shallow love. This love must be the same love that Christ exhibited as He walked the way to the cross. Peter did not understand that love and would have to learn a hard lesson over the next few days. We are no different than Peter. Let us learn his lessons by knowing God's word. If we do not, God will have to teach us in a very hard way. Sing Psalter 369.

January 26 Read John 14:1-6

People of God, are your hearts troubled? Are there things happening to you which cause you spiritual pain? Is a loved one dying? If your hearts are troubled, take the time to read this chapter often. Because Jesus has gone to heaven and is preparing a place for us there, our hearts need not be troubled. When our place is ready, we will be delivered from this vale of tears. Because He is the way, the truth, and the life; we need not fear what happens on this earth. Jesus is the way to the Father, and of that there is no doubt. Let not your hearts be troubled, believe in God and He will give you the comfort found in Him. Sing Psalter 357.

January 27 Read John 14:7-14

As Jesus continues His words of comfort that night, the disciples were plainly puzzled. All that was going on around them had confused them greatly. Jesus was teaching them and us about Himself and the Father. He was leaving with them great promises. These are the promises that He gives to us. He tells us to walk in His name and we will be blessed by the Father. He tells us to pray that we may receive the blessing of the peace of knowing the Father. Are we walking in God's commandments? Are we daily praying for peace? If we are, we will find the peace that comes only from God. Sing Psalter 348.

January 28 Read John 14:15-21

Do you love Christ? Do you keep His commandments? The two go hand in hand. You cannot say that you love God and ignore His commandments. There are many in the world who think that and it brings them nothing but disaster. There is a beautiful promise in these verses. There is the promise of the Spirit and all the blessings of the Spirit. There is also the blessing of the love of the Father. As we live our lives in this sinful world, we must love God and keep His commandments. In this way we will be blessed. Sing Psalter 341.

January 29 Read John 14:21-26

Yesterday we spoke of the blessings of the Spirit. Let us look at that idea more closely today. Jesus was preparing to leave His disciples. He knew that they were fearful of this idea. So He gave to them the promise of the Spirit who would help them in all of their difficulties. We have that same promise. Christ has poured out the Holy Spirit upon the church. We have that comforter who aids us in all trials and troubles. We can be assured that He will help us even as we are mocked by the wicked. None of us needs to fear death because we have the comfort of the Spirit. Whether we are dying or have loved ones who are dying, we have a comfort unmatched by anything that the world can offer. Sing Psalter 391.

January 30 Read John 14:27-31

The world seeks peace. But they seek this peace in the wrong places. They want war to cease but they do not see that war is ordained by God. They want peace within the family, but they do despite to the family by means of divorce, remarriage, abortion, abuse, and by many other evils. The world does not know what true peace is. Thankfully we can find true peace. Jesus has given that peace to us. We have peace because we know that He is in heaven preparing a place for us. Our hearts do not need to be troubled or afraid. We have the peace that passeth all understanding. Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift. Sing Psalter 100.

January 31 Read John 14:27-31

As we close this chapter let us again look at it from Jesus' perspective. In a few short hours He would be captured, tortured, mocked, and unjustly judged. Then He would be hung on the cross and would endure much suffering and pain. What was He doing in these last hours? He was making sure that His disciples had the peace and comfort that they needed. What an elder brother that we have! He washes our feet and cares for us. Let us cherish the words in this chapter and remember them throughout our lives. Memorizing the chapter will afford to us much comfort no matter how old or young we are. Sing Psalter 331.

Christmas Carols

by Melissa Van Baren

Aaahhh...the pretty snow that falls. The trees illuminated in the windows. Friends and families visit. Food is abundant and presents are numerous. The carols seem glorious. It's not hard to guess what time of the year it is. For most of us, it's our favorite time of year. It is a wonderful time of the year. Nevertheless, we all know what it's really about. Sometimes it seems like it wouldn't be the same without these things but we do know that it's not these things that matter but the fact that Christ came into this world. We know what the *true* Christmas is.

Did you ever notice how our Psalter is a glorious "carol book" in itself? Well, not just the Psalter but also the Psalms? It's a wonderful thing to think about. Oh, don't get me wrong here. I'm not saying that the Christmas carols are wrong or that we have to do away with them. Some are very pretty. We very much are able to glorify God by them and it depends on you and your heart when you are singing them to God. I was just pointing out the fact that the Psalms speak over and over of Christ's glory and of Christ's coming.

It's great that we are able to take our Psalter and Psalms and even sing them at Christmas time. I'm not saying either that they are to be considered Christmas songs by the tunes either. It's the words that really make them "Christmas" songs.

In the Psalms, David was always looking towards the coming of Christ; whereas we are looking back on Christ's birth and looking forward to His coming again. If we look deeper into the meaning of Christ's birth and why He had to come, it would point us all the more to His death. Taking that into consideration, the Psalms are filled with things that talk about His birth. Isn't it amazing how the Christian is given a totally different perspective of how to look at things?

Take for instance, Psalter 416. David in this versification of Psalm 42 says:

*But the Lord will send salvation,
and by day His love provide:*

*He shall be my exultation,
and my song at eventide.
On His praise e'en in the night
I will ponder with delight,
And in prayer transcending distance,
Seek the God of my existence.*

This song speaks of God sending salvation, which is Christ, and then we as saints praising His name. Amazing isn't it? It deals with Christ's birth.

What we realize all the more by considering the importance of this time of the year is that we are praising God for the gift of His Son. Now in the Psalms there is an *even greater* abundance of praise for God.

*Praise ye, praise ye the Lord
in yonder heavenly height;
Ye angels, all His hosts,
in joyful praise unite;
O sun and moon, declare His might,
Show forth His praise, ye stars of light.*

*By all let God be praised,
for He alone is great;
above the earth and heaven
He reigns in glorious state;
Praise Him, ye saints, who know His grace
and ever dwell before His face.*

(Psalter 404, vss. 1, 5).

It is what the Psalms are that brings praise to God. So, every day we pick up the Psalter, we are continually praising God for the gift of His Son. Amazing! Every Sunday, and every day in class as students and every day at devotions, we are singing "Christmas carols." How wonderful is that? What a concept! What a different new way of looking at things when we pick up our Psalter.



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

Arminianism (11)

The Saints Assured of Persevering

by Aaron J. Cleveland

Having considered the doctrines of total depravity, unconditional election, limited atonement, and irresistible grace, we now consider the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints as explained in the Fifth Head of the Canons.

Concerning the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints, the Arminians, at the time of the Synod of Dordt, were very deceitful. In the Remonstrance of 1610, the Arminian position was that the doctrine was not yet carefully developed and that it must more clearly be determined from the Bible. Article 5 of the Remonstrance of 1610 reads,

that those who are incorporated into Jesus Christ and thereby become partakers of his life-giving Spirit have abundant strength to strive against Satan, sin, the world, and their own flesh and to obtain the victory; it being well understood (that this is) through the assistance of the grace of the Holy Spirit, and that Jesus Christ assists them through his Spirit in all temptations, extends the hand, and—if only they are prepared for warfare and desire his help and are not negligent—keeps them standing, so that by no cunning or power of Satan can they be led astray or plucked out of Christ’s hands, according to the word of Christ, John 10, “No one shall pluck them out of my hands.” But whether they can through negligence fall away from the first principle of their life in Christ, again embrace the present world, depart from the pure doctrine once given to them, lose the good conscience, and neglect grace, must first be more carefully determined from the Holy Scriptures before we shall be able to teach this with the full persuasion of our heart. (*Essays in Commemoration of the Synod of Dort* (1618-’19), p. 209).

That the Arminians left this doctrine as an open question was deceitful for a couple of reasons. First of all, the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints was already clearly set forth by the Reformed churches in the

Heidelberg Catechism. One only has to read the first Q & A of the Catechism to know that this is true. Many other portions of the Catechism are abundantly clear that the elect are everlastingly preserved by God in the enjoyment of their salvation (see Lord’s Day 12, and Lord’s Day 19) The Catechism allows no possibility for the elect to fall away and perish everlastingly. Secondly, this was deceitful because the men who formulated the Remonstrance of 1610 were among the leaders of the church. It is one thing for ministers and professors to legitimately have questions about doctrines that have not yet been fully developed in the history of the church. It is quite another when leaders deceitfully place questions into the minds of the ordinary members of the church about doctrines which are clearly established in the creeds. And this was the intent of the Arminian party when they wrote Article 5 of the Remonstrance of 1610.

What the Arminians did not call into question about perseverance, they corrupted. It is apparent from the article quoted above that the Arminians maintained a conditional perseverance. The Arminian position is that the power to persevere is really within man. It is man who has “abundant strength to strive against Satan, sin, the world, and [his] own flesh and to obtain the victory.” Christ “through the assistance of the grace of the Holy Spirit” extends a helping hand to man. Yet this “assisting grace” is man’s only if he exercises his free will and desires God’s help.” With man doing the work and God assisting, the saint perseveres, or maybe not. This position fits consistently into the entire Arminian scheme of salvation. To man belongs the power, God picks up the slack. The final outcome is always in doubt.

If this position of the Arminians is not terrifying enough, one should further read the Arminian position as stated in *The Opinions of the Remonstrants* (the official Arminian document presented at the Synod of Dordt). Concerning perseverance, Opinion D.4. states, “True

believers are able to fall through their own fault into shameful and atrocious deeds, to persevere and to die in them; and therefore finally to fall and to perish” (*Essays*, p. 228). Opinion D.8. states,

A true believer can and ought indeed to be certain for the future that he is able, by diligent watchfulness, through prayers, and through other holy exercises, to persevere in true faith, and he ought also to be certain that divine grace for persevering will never be lacking; but we do not see how he can be certain that he will never afterwards be remiss in his duty but that he will persevere in faith and in those works of piety and love which are fitting for a believer in this school of Christian warfare; neither do we deem in necessary that concerning this thing a believer should be certain (*Essays*, p. 229).

By these statements the Arminians affirmed their opinion that “true believers” not only are able to perish in their sins, but that they ought to maintain every doubt that they will fall away and perish. The Arminians despise any kind of certainty of perseverance. Uncertainty and doubt, according to the Arminian position, is normal and preferable for the saint.

Contrary to the despairing Arminian position is the comforting Reformed view of the perseverance of the saints as set forth in the Fifth Head of the Canons. That truth begins with man’s utter inability and God’s sovereign power. Article 3 makes clear that if the saints were left to their own strength to persevere, they would surely be defeated by their own sin and the temptations of sin and the world. It is God who is faithful, “who having conferred grace, mercifully confirms, and powerfully preserves them therein, even to the end.” God begins, maintains, and brings our salvation to its perfection.

Article 8 highlights some of the contrasts between the Arminian and Reformed views regarding the perseverance of the saints. The Arminians set forth a perseverance of man’s “own merits” and “strength.” The Reformed teach a perseverance only of “God’s free mercy.” The Arminians teach the possibility of a total fall from faith and grace by the saint. The Reformed teach the certain perseverance of the saints. As far as man is concerned, say the Arminians, a fall could easily happen. With man, say the Reformed, this “is not only possible, but would undoubtedly happen.” With respect to God, say the Arminians, a fall is possible. With respect to God, say the Reformed, a final perishing in sin of the saint “is utterly impossible, since His counsel cannot be changed, nor His promise fail.” The comforting Reformed truth is

that the saint is preserved because of who God is, the unchanging God. Further, the work of Christ in our salvation cannot be “rendered ineffectual.” Nor is our sealing by the Holy Spirit “frustrated or obliterated.”

The believer not only confesses the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints as an objective fact, but is given of God to live in the assurance that this perseverance belongs to himself. According to Article 9, every “true believer” experiences “according to the measure of their faith” the assurance of their own preservation in salvation. This is in stark contrast to the Arminians who deny both perseverance and any assurance that one may have of persevering.

The certainty of the saint’s perseverance was bitterly opposed by the Arminians. They hurled in the faces of the Reformed that this truth would work in the believers a “spirit of pride” and render them “carnally secure” (Art. 12). Article 12 soundly answers this false accusation and shows how exactly the opposite is true. That which is completely of God’s free mercy without anything of man’s does not make a believer proud, but is the greatest cause for humility. From this humility flows “filial reverence, true piety, patience in every tribulation, fervent prayers, constancy in suffering, and in confessing the truth.” Prof. H. Hoeksema, commenting on this article in relation to the idea of “fervent prayers” writes, “It is not a state of doubt and uncertainty that fosters fervent prayer, but a state of assurance. For, in the first place, prayer must be characterized by confidence” (*The Voice of Our Fathers*, p. 735). And so it is with all of the Christian life, especially when we suffer for the sake of confessing the truth. We are able to do this only while living out of the certainty of our own perseverance.

Paragraph 6 of the Rejection of Errors also answers the related Arminian charge that the Reformed view of perseverance is “a cause of indolence and is injurious to godliness, good morals, prayers, and other holy exercises.” Many take the position that a believer is motivated to obedience if he is constantly in a state of doubt and uncertainty about his salvation. If he is doubtful about being a child of God he will be more careful to make good moral decisions. If he is uncertain about his salvation he will be careful to go to church and pray. They take the position, in the words of Paragraph 6, that “it is praiseworthy to doubt.” That idea is exactly wrong say the Canons, “for these show that they do not know the power of divine grace and the working of the indwelling Holy Spirit.” Read Hebrews 11 and know that the “he-

roes of faith” were not spurred on by doubt, but were “looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith” (Heb. 12:2).

While this has only been a brief look at some of the aspects of the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints, it is enough of a glimpse to know the glorious truth that we possess in the Reformed faith. God sovereignly preserved this truth against the attacks of the Arminians at the time of the Synod of Dordt. Today, we as Protestant Reformed Churches stand in this same truth. Let us not be ashamed of it. Rather, let us follow the example of our fathers at Dordrecht who by God’s grace unashamedly confessed the truth and sharply opposed the lie. Writes Prof. H. Hoeksema in this connection,

There is so little militancy for the cause of the Reformed faith today! When those who oppose the truth are met, we can be so ready to belittle and compromise and well-nigh hide our Reformed faith and its distinctive character, as though we were really ashamed of it. And how boldly we ought instead to stand in the faith, cast far from us false and foul accusations which are hurled against the truth (*V.O.O.F.*, p. 732). ❖

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

Our Young People’s Federation

Federation Board Update

by Kevin Gritters

A new season of Young People’s Societies has begun in the Protestant Reformed churches. The Federation Board, the young peoples’ leaders, and the young people alike look forward to another year of spiritual fellowship and growth. One is sure to know the young people and the leaders, but one might not be so sure what the Federation Board itself is and what it does. This article will explain the content and the purpose of the Federation Board, and it will give a brief background of its new members.

The Federation Board is a group of young people, young adults, and adult advisors that works on behalf of the Protestant Reformed Young People’s Societies. The new members are first nominated by the existing Board members, and then elected by the young people. The Board conducts a meeting at Faith Protestant Reformed Church on the first Sunday of each month to carry out this work. The meetings are well attended by the Board members, and each member works diligently in his or her position to exercise the duty to which he or she has been elected.

One of the main purposes of the Federation Board is to coordinate interaction among the Protestant Reformed

Church’s Young People’s Societies. We sponsor activities and other events intended to promote development and growth of the young people. Mass meetings, singspirations, fundraisers, and conventions serve the purpose of developing unity among the societies.

A second work of the Federation Board is to be involved with the publication of the *Beacon Lights*. The *Beacon Lights* provides edifying material for the young people to read, so it is necessary for Christian writers—both young and old—to devote some of their time to write for the covenant youth of our churches. This year the Federation Board is striving to work more closely with the *Beacon Lights* staff, and we ask that you contribute any thoughts or articles you may have.

As the ruling body of the Young People’s Societies, the Federation Board seeks to accurately convey the Protestant Reformed position with regard to the Christian life. Our young people must walk together in unity and show—both in character and in speech—that they belong to the body of Christ. We pray that the world may see that the Protestant Reformed young people walk a different kind of life because of their love for God and His church.

The Federation Board consists of a president, treasurer, and secretary, with an assistant for each position. There is also a librarian, youth coordinator, and two spiritual advisors.

On behalf of the present Federation Board, we thank the following board members who retired this year: Trevor Kalsbeek (President), Brad Pastoor (Treasurer), Audra Bol (Secretary), Jeanine Boeve (Librarian), and Rev. Terpstra (Spiritual Advisor). Thanks again for your diligent and faithful work.

The new members of the Federation Board were elected at the delegate meeting at the last convention in Loveland, Colorado.

Matthew Overway, Vice-President, is son of Brent and Wilma Overway. He is a member of First Protestant Reformed Church of Holland and is presently pursuing a career in nursing at Grand Valley State University. He hopes his time on the Federation Board will help him learn to be an effective member of a governing body so that he can, by the grace of God, one day perform the duties to which he may be called in service for the church.

Jeff Van Uffelen, Vice-Treasurer, is son of John and Linda Van Uffelen. He is a member of First Protestant Reformed Church of Holland and is pursuing a degree in mathematics at Grand Valley State University. He also works in the machine area at Koops Inc. He would like to see the Federation Board establish valuable leadership and make careful decisions. He also wants the Fed. Board to become a catalyst to our youth's zealous un-

covering of Scripture's profound secrets, realizing that growth comes from personal study of biblical truths.

Sara Huizinga, Vice-Secretary, is daughter of James and Barbara Huizinga. She is a member of Hope Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids. After spending one year at Grand Valley State University, she is looking for full time work. She would like to see the Federation Board more involved with the young people, provide a good example to them, and show them the work that takes place.

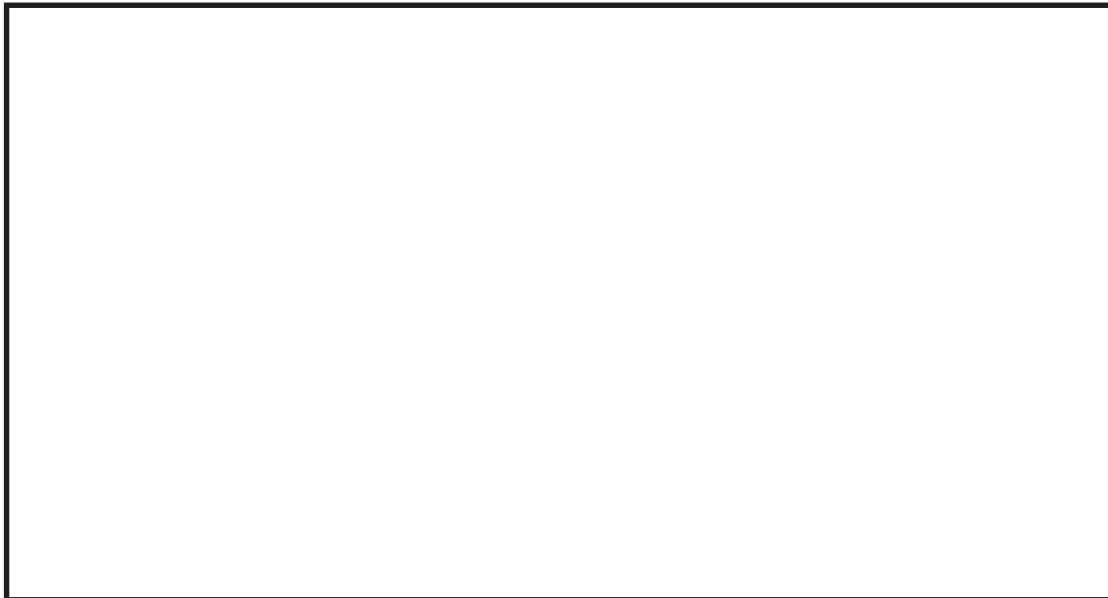
Sarah Koole, Librarian, is daughter of James and Gladys Koole. She is a member of Hope Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids and is pursuing an elementary education degree at Calvin College. She wants to see the Federation Board guide the young people of our denomination closer to God, so that all they do may give glory to God alone.

Rev. Ron Van Overloop, Spiritual Advisor, has been pastor at Georgetown Protestant Reformed Church since 1994.

For a complete list of all the current members, one can look on the inside front cover of the *Beacon Lights*.

The Federation Board welcomes the new members and asks for your prayers and for God's blessing upon this new year of work. ❖

Kevin is President of the Young People's Federation Board and is a member of Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church in Hudsonville, Michigan.



Federation Board. *Back row: Jeff Van Uffelen, Brad Vander Veen, Matthew Overway, Kevin Gritters. Front row: Jim Holstege, Rachel Kuiper, Sarah Koole, Sara Huizinga, Prof. Gritters. Absent: Rev. Van Overloop.*

Study Proverbs This Society Season

Study for Week #17: Rebuking Your Neighbor?

Texts from Proverbs: 9:8; 24:24, 25; 25:9, 10, 12; 27:17; 28:4, 23. See also Luke 17:3, I Tim. 5:20, Psalm 141:5, Eccl. 7:5.

Questions to help “the word of Christ dwell in you richly:”

1. What does it mean to rebuke someone? Does rebuke always mean to be angry?
2. Is it easier to rebuke a friend or someone you don't know well? Why is it so difficult to tell someone about their faults?
3. Does the Bible tell us that we must rebuke others? Prove your answer.
4. Who does the Christian rebuke? Everyone he sees sinning? No one? Where do you wisely draw the line? (See also Matt. 7:6)
5. How may we rebuke others when we read what we do in Matthew 7:1-5?

Study for Week #18: Review

I thought it appropriate to have a review and discussion of the things that we have discussed in this past year's young peoples society. I would like everyone to have an answer or opinion to one of the following questions.

1. **The End Times.** We started our discussion this year with the study of Matthew 24, in light of the September 11 terrorism attack on America. Since then the

country has settled down quite a bit. Do you think that these attacks have had any long term effects on you, the USA and the world? What are they?

2. **Reverence for God.** How can we as young people help each other to reverence God?
3. **Study of God's Word.** How has this young people's society been an aid in the study of God's word? How could it be better?
4. **Rebuke and correction.** Why is it so hard to hear reproof from a fellow young person or even from a parent?
5. **Anger.** How does a Christian express his anger? What can we be angry about?
6. **Warnings against drinking.** What are the effects of sinful drinking? How does too much drink “mock” a person?
7. **The strange woman or the sin of fornication.** What is fornication? What are the sorry results of this sin and how do we keep ourselves from it?
8. **Greed and covetousness.** Is it a sin to want to be rich and what should be our view about riches?
9. **Hatred.** What is the root cause of hatred? May we hate anyone?
10. **The hateful talebearer (gossip).** Can we talk about someone else behind their back? Who here likes to gossip and how has this gossiping hurt someone?
11. **Prayer.** What is prayer? How can we use our prayers to confess our sins?
12. **Friendships.** What are the qualities of a good friendship?

13. **Pride.** What is pride and how does it affect the way we want to look?
14. **Stewardship.** What is a good steward and how can we be good stewards in our work, money, possessions, etc.?
15. **Respect for parents.** How should we treat our parents? Why is it so hard for some teenagers to treat their parents with respect?
16. **Self Control.** In what areas of our life should we have self control as teenagers? Are there too many pressures on us to lose control?

Study for Week #19:

Matthew 24:14-18

Verse 14

1. How was the gospel limited in the Old Testament?
This text is a more positive sign for us today. Read Revelation 6 about the white horse.
2. What kind of gospel is to be preached today? A gospel where all men are saved? A gospel where God loves all men?
3. Is it to be a gospel of peace? Read Matthew 10:34, 35.
4. The text talks about a kingdom. Is this kingdom to be of this world?
5. How do we as Protestant Reformed churches see that the gospel is preached in all the nations? Do we as Protestant Reformed churches put forth enough effort in preaching to all nations? Give examples.

Verses 15-18

6. What is the abomination of desolations? See II Thess. 2:3, 4; 1 John 2:18; Rev. 13 (mark of the beast 666).
7. Give examples of people of the Old Testament and in the present times who have risen as Antichrists?
8. What about man in general. How does man think that he is a god? What are some of the ways that man makes himself out to be better than God? Give examples of things that man does and things that man has invented that make him think he is God?
9. He maintains that anything he can imagine he can do? Have any of you heard this frame of thinking? As you contemplate an occupation have you not often heard this from people who give guidance to young people?

10. Man also helps other people. He helps the poor, the sick, the aged, infants, etc. He helps those involved in the terrorists' attacks. Do you think that this makes man feel good about himself? Should we also help?
11. How is the world becoming united? What do you know about the United Nations? How is the church world becoming united? It is good, isn't it?
12. Is the world ready for destruction? Is the United States of America ripe for judgment? Look at all the sin everywhere. Look at the debt the nation has. Look at the entertainment-crazy people we live with and are a part of. Look at the sports-crazed society we live in.

Study for Week #20:

Matthew 24:15-30

Verses 19-30

1. What does tribulation mean?
2. 40 years after Jesus ascended, the Romans took over and killed the Jews. The Christians were now scattered through the whole earth. Read Hebrews 11:33-38. Why did God reject the Jews at this time? Why are Jews so persecuted today and in the past? Hitler?
3. What about our afflictions in recent years? Does any one know about our Dutch forefathers who left Holland in the 1834 because of the afflictions put on them by the state church? What afflictions do we have today?
4. Reformation is needed in a church at times. Why? What are the effects of reformation on church and family? Do we need reformation? In what areas do we need to be reformed?
5. At the end of times there still will be public worship but it will be worship to the wrong god and the Christians will have to meet in secret. Every nation and person will be required to worship the beast. What do you think this beast will be? Scripture tells us everyone will wear a mark on his forehead. 666. What does 666 mean?
6. What are some of the things that we as Christian will no be able to do?
7. Even the elect would be deceived if it were possible. The time will be shortened. The Christians will cry to the rocks to fall on them. Are you as young people ready to face challenges like this? Is our church ready for it? Are our parents ready for it? ❖

George M. Ophoff (13)

On Common Grace

by Prof. Herman Hanko

Not too many years of Rev. Ophoff's work as pastor of the congregation of Hope went by before he became actively embroiled in the common grace controversy. As we noticed already in another connection, the controversy over common grace had long agitated the church before it became an ecclesiastical issue at the Synod of 1924. And Rev. Ophoff had come to an independent conclusion on the issue while he was still a student in the Seminary. It is not our intention in this series of articles to go over the whole controversy as it led up to and was "settled" by the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church when it adopted the three points in 1924. This material can be found in many other writings, particularly: *The History of the Protestant Reformed Churches* and *Therefore Have I Spoken*. Furthermore, Rev. Ophoff himself played no active role in the history of the Synod. His views at the time of the Synod had not been publicly expressed and were not an issue at the Synod. The Synod did not deal with him and his views when it formulated the three points, and Rev. Ophoff himself was not a delegate to that Synod. Rev. Ophoff enters the picture after the Synod was held.

He enters the picture with the publication of the *Standard Bearer*. For those who are interested in the history of the *Standard Bearer*, the anniversary volume of this periodical can be consulted. A short history appears in the second issue of Volume 50, pages 32-34. Rev. Ophoff was not among those who formed the original publication committee. According to the minutes of that committee, Rev. Ophoff joined the organization on October 27, 1924, and was immediately appointed to a position

on the editorial staff. Nevertheless, his name appears on the masthead of the very first issue. He had, therefore, committed himself to the cause of the truth at the very outset of the movement.

Rev. Ophoff's first article appeared in the second issue, dated November, 1924. A few quotes from it will give some idea of his own personal sentiments concerning the whole common grace question. It will, at the same time, show some of the characteristic spiritedness and total lack of fear which were to be such significant features of Rev. Ophoff's writings throughout the years.

In an article entitled "A Declaration," Rev Ophoff writes as follows:

And thus it happens that I, the undersigned, am of the group editing this periodical. The fact that I agree to serve upon the editorial staff of the "Standard Bearer" amounts to an admission on my part that I too reject the views and conception of things which the term common grace stands for. For me it is quite impossible to adhere to the principles embedded in the term common grace and remain on friendly terms with Scripture.

I am aware of it that he who has the audacity to deny common grace is regarded as disgustingly dense, inconceivably conceited and destructive. In the October issue of "Religion and Culture,"

page 69, Prof. Van Andel writes: "And that now some young American ministers of Dutch descent contend that this doctrine of common grace is not traditionally reformed. How little hold has the reformed truth had on some of us that they do not feel that they are undermining the very foundations of



Rev. Ophoff with son, Fred.

Christian that is Calvinistic Theology, ethics and philosophy.” You see, the huge mental and spiritual denseness and the inconceivable conceit of the deniers of common grace staggers the brother. We are ramming in pieces the very foundations of Calvinistic theology, ethics and philosophy.

No doubt we should have trembled in our boots when this monstrous accusation was hurled our way, I suppose for the purpose of terrifying our souls. And I suppose we ought to have blushed when our friend let us see how blunted our receptive and assimilative faculties are. Yet we did not blush, neither did we tremble. And why not? Because we are too hardened and insensible to blush? No. Because our nerves are of steel so that nothing shocks us? No. We were not disturbed because we had no guarantee whether or not the professor was simply seeing things again. This happened before with him. History proves that the professor is subject to hallucinations. According to Pillsbury (a writer in Psychology, H.H.), a hallucination does not arise from objective phenomenon.

After describing what this “hallucination” was, Rev. Ophoff goes on to give his reasons for rejecting common grace.

Well do we realize that among the adherents of the views which we reject is found the master mind. The chief exponent of the doctrine of Common Grace, the late Dr. A. Kuyper, was a recognized genius. This man devoted time and energy to the development of the doctrine of Common Grace. A work of three volumes was the result. Yet a careful study of Scripture and our standards on the one hand and the doctrine of common grace on the other hand convinced me that the views and the conception of things which the term “common grace” stands for, clash with Scripture. Therefore, I could not do otherwise than break with the doctrine.

However, it was not without considerable hesitancy that I did so. It is a difficult matter to part company with a great Christian thinker like Kuyper. One is constantly haunted by the thought that it is one self who errs. What is more, the existence of common grace is a settled thing. We have come to believe in it as a matter of course. So be it. I cannot see it otherwise but that the doctrine of common grace clashes with Scripture.

Rev. Ophoff goes on then to show how the writings of those who defend common grace deny in fact the truth of total depravity. He concludes this with the remark:

I, as a reformed preacher, cannot and will not preach total depravity and in the next breath assure my hear-

ers that the depraved sinner, in his depraved state, performs noble deeds, has pure emotions, and thinks good thoughts. God’s Word unclothes the sinner, strips him of every virtue and sends him naked to Christ. God forbid that I stop that sinner on the way to cloth him in the beautiful garments of common grace. I should fear lest that sinner would no longer feel the need of Christ....

Such and similar thoughts finding their way into this (article) did its share in opening my eyes to the dangers and fallacies of common grace.

There are other things which caused me to break with common grace....

By this, Rev. Ophoff referred particularly to many inconsistencies and problems which the defenders of common grace themselves brought up, which led him to the conviction that such views were contrary to the clear and unambiguous teachings of Scripture. He concludes this section with the words:

These methods of *some* of the exponents and defenders of common grace, their faulty thoughts, illogical reasonings, their blunders, their noise, widened the breach between me and common grace. I thought, it can not be there is so very much to say in defense of common grace after all.

Then too, it seems to me that the exponents of common grace are bent on misunderstanding, misrepresenting and misinterpreting the opponents of common grace...

All these different things taken together disengaged me from the doctrine of common grace. I regard the doctrine dangerous, as well as the views and conception of things which the term stands for. I shall use my talents to help expose, in the light of God’s Word, the dangers and fallacies of common grace.

The Synod of 1924 declared itself for common grace. Yet the Synod evaded the real issues. The Synod failed to furnish proof. The existence of common grace has never been proven. The objections raised against it have never been removed.

Well, that was a sharply, unequivocal stand. And from that resolve, Rev. Ophoff never wavered in all his life. But such a firm commitment to the cause of the truth led to trouble within a matter of weeks. ❖

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



But it is good for me
to draw near to GOD:
I have put my trust in
the Lord God, that I
may declare all thy works.

PSALM 73: 28

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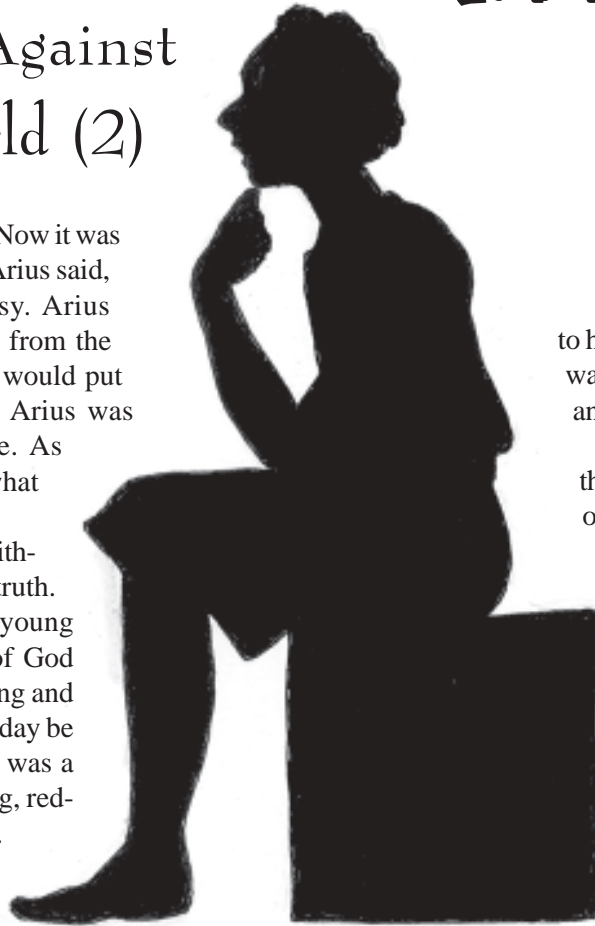
by Connie Meyer

Alexander had no choice. Now it was public. Everyone knew what Arius said, and what he said was heresy. Arius ought to be excommunicated from the church. But—such an action would put the whole city in an uproar. Arius was much-liked by many people. As archbishop of Alexandria, what would Alexander do?

Alexander was an aged, faithful servant of God and of His truth. His helper and deacon, the young Athanasius, loved the truth of God as well. Alexander was teaching and preparing Athanasius to some day be archbishop in his stead. Now was a good time to involve his young, red-headed student in the fray. "Athanasius, we have a serious battle on our hands. What shall we do?"

Athanasius was deeply interested in the truths of Scripture. God had also gifted him with a sharp and brilliant mind. Though barely in his twenties, he had already written theological books worthy of note. Athanasius would do whatever he must in defense of the truth of the gospel. Together they saw that all the churches needed to be warned of the false teachings in their midst.

A letter was sent to the churches of Egypt and Syria, both East and West. A council of one hundred bishops traveled to Alexandria from all over the Roman Empire



to hear the heretic for themselves. The year was 323. Now the truth could come out and the poison of the lie could be stopped.

Arius stood with confidence before the presiding bishops. "The three Persons of the Trinity are not all equal in glory and majesty. The Son was not begotten of the Father, but was created. He can change from good to evil."

It was enough for the bishops. They could hardly believe their ears. Jesus was a creature and not God? Arius was indeed a heretic!

But two bishops sided with Arius. They stood firm in their false doctrine. It was then the solemn duty of Archbishop Alexander to pronounce the anathema of God upon these three

together. They were cast out of the fellowship and offices of the church until they might repent of their heresies and lies.

But how strong a hold had the lie already taken? The battle was by no means over.

(to be continued) ❖

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



**"As we said before, so say I now again,
If any man preach any other gospel unto you
than that ye have received, let him be accursed."**

Galatians 1:9



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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:
Faith Renee, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Dan Knott—Byron
Center, MI

Dana Marie, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Brad DeBoer—
Doon, IA

Aubrey Lynne, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Brad Langerak—
Grace, MI

Justin Allen, son of Mr. & Mrs. David Steenwyk—
Georgetown, MI

Brylynn Sue, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Kevin
VanOverloop—Holland, MI

Riley Noel, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Jeff Miedema—
Hudsonville, MI

Nathan Colin, son of Mr. & Mrs. Colin Buchanan—
Fellowship of Northern Ireland

Dora Beth, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Brian Bruinsma—
Peace, IL

Karissa Jo, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Dave Moore—Peace,
IL

Tyler Mark, son of Mr. & Mrs. Dale Lenting—South
Holland, IL

Anna, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Joel Holleman—South
Holland, IL

Rylee Madissen, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Brian
TenBrock—Southwest, MI

Lucas Bradley, son of Mr. & Mrs. Brad Kuiper—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:

Jason Koll—Byron Center, MI

Betsy Kamps—Hope, MI

Katy Miersma—Hope, MI

Brian Hop—Hope, MI

Emily Hoksbergen—Hull, IA

Stefan Griess—Loveland, CO

Mikal Dykshorn—Peace, IL

Kyle Prins—Trinity, MI